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Occupying the Tea Party
The Rise of Contemporary Libertarian Culture in the United States

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**Occupying the Tea Party:
The Rise of Contemporary Libertarian Culture
in the United States**

Volume I

Alfred Christopher Cardone

PhD in American Studies Research

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Abstract

Common opinion concerning Occupy and the Tea Party is that they represent extreme ends of the "left-right" political paradigm in the United States. With Republican "Tea Party" candidates and the "hippy" appearance of Occupy encampments, it is no surprise that such opinions exist today. However, does this imply that there is no alternative characterization that can be applied to either? I argue that there is another way to characterize them, if one abandons the homogenous description many place on both movements and realize that there are many actors in American politics today that assume the title of Occupy or Tea Party.

Upon considering this, sections of both become noticeable that have escaped national attention and have largely been ignored by established media outlets (TV news, newspapers, etc.). These sections are largely comprised of libertarian and anarchist elements that are seeking to redefine how Americans view their political system in order to escape the perceived injustices that occurred in the aftermath of the housing bubble collapse and the subsequent recession. They are acting in stark contrast to the recognizable conservative section of the Tea Party and progressive section of Occupy, who are pursuing largely established partisan agendas. While conservatives and progressives are accentuating the polarization of American politics, libertarians seek to transcend it and offer alternatives to an American public that is frustrated with the status quo.

Furthermore, many of these libertarian and anarchist elements in both the Tea Party and Occupy are working together, creating a larger ideological political spectrum in which these activists look to cooperate and further their message. It challenges the notion of both being polar opposites, which becomes even more apparent after discovering the libertarian

origins of both. Libertarians and anarchists have demonstrated how the Tea Party and Occupy have incorrectly been confined within certain definitions and the possibilities they can bring to American politics.

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Introduction

A year and half of research concerning the Tea Party and Occupy led to the PorcFest X (2013) libertarian festival at Roger's Campground in Lancaster, New Hampshire- a rural part of New England in the Appalachian Mountains. At the entrance, there were people, with some carrying rifles and hand guns while others were dressed in elaborate costumes, moving amongst the tents and a huge pavilion that welcomes the visitor as they come onto the site. Preliminary reports claim that there were one thousand five hundred registered participants (with more unregistered), which made it a rather large collection of activists. As one travelled further into the campgrounds, there was the Agora Valley, a collection of commercial stands, with some posting signs like "Liberty: Too Big to Fail" and "One Small Step with Bitcoin," selling organic food and hemp products. At the allotments for participants to pitch their tents (this was a camping festival), there were signs advising people on how not to attract bears onto the campgrounds. Even at the individual tents, there were signs and flags with one allotment flying the Confederate flag next to the gay pride flag at the same time. Everything at this festival was completely counterintuitive when one considers how participants in mainstream politics organize themselves, never mind the popular image many Americans have of the Tea Party, Occupy, and libertarians.

Yet, there was imagery at PorcFest that many would associate with the Tea Party, or at least what many would consider "right-wing" in American politics. Signs like "Liberty: Too Big to Fail" and others like it are reminiscent of Tea Party positions on individual freedom, which was reinforced by the name of the actual organizers of the event- The Free State

Project. Ron Paul and Gary Johnson bumper stickers on cars parked at the festival furthered this connection, as each are seen as either Republican candidates or offshoots of that party, along with the omnipresent reminders that firearms were everywhere at this event. Flyers concerning “The Etiquette of Carrying Fire Arms” found everywhere at PorcFest would probably be the pinnacle of what Americans would expect from Tea Party gatherings. However, when looking past these examples, the presence of another presentation tent further away from the entrance entitled the “Alternatives Exposition” offered a strong contrast to this association with the Tea Party at PorcFest.

There were several independent tents apart from the Free State Project that organized events and scheduled speakers separate from the daily main events at the pavilion and the large tents at the entrance. The Alternatives Exposition (Alt-Expo), one such example, took a more “left-libertarian” approach to issues and life styles important in society today. “Alt-Expo kind of speaks for itself really. It’s an exposition for alternatives to the main stream in medicine, in culture, in history, and in politics.”¹ Alt-Expo would be a bit of an anomaly to most Americans in that “typically the Alt-Expo attracts a lot of left-libertarians because the organizers are left-libertarians,” causing many not acquainted with the activists at PorcFest now to question what exactly left-libertarianism is.² When describing what they normally present, an activist with Alt-Expo stated, “So we tend to have some more ‘radical thinking’ people. We have become a little more mainstream if you will, at least as mainstream as you can be as a libertarian, but we are still strongly rooted in anti-voting.”³ This activist is particularly relevant because he was active in Occupy Boston and

¹ Interviewee Independent 7, New Hampshire, USA, via Skype, 4 April 2013, Volume II, pg. 263

² Interviewee Independent 7, New Hampshire, USA, via Skype, 4 April 2013, Volume II, pg. 263

³ Interviewee Independent 7, New Hampshire, USA, via Skype, 4 April 2013, Volume II, pg. 263

referenced the PorcFest as a potential resource to learn about other facets of Occupy, as well as the Tea Party.

When considering that Alt-Expo exists alongside the imagery so familiar with the Tea Party mentioned earlier, PorcFest becomes difficult to understand for those who view the American political spectrum through the “left-right” paradigm. Alt-Expo holds several talks concerning the dangers of capitalism and the benefits of cooperative, or even collective, action in political and societal organizations; challenging the rugged individuality of common Tea Party positions. The acceptance of any variation in gender roles and the openness towards polyamory and alternative relationships contradicts many assumptions that indicate that PorcFest was a conservative event either. The very type of libertarianism that the majority of the constituents at Alt-Expo adhered to was defined as “left-libertarianism,” which has many representations like market anarchism, the Alliance of the Libertarian Left, and traditional anarchists- all of which are never associated with Tea Party partisans. What made Alt-Expo, as well as the Free State Project, even more incongruent with mainstream politics and the common perceptions of the Tea Party and Occupy was the apparent mixing of political elements together.

One poignant example was the presentation “Conspiracy Theorists vs Skeptics,” a discussion between two libertarian activists concerning whether theorizing about government conspiracies is damaging to the philosophy of libertarianism, at the Alt-Expo tent. What was astonishing about this presentation was, firstly, that one of the presenters was a member of the Tea Party arguing in favor of the existence of government conspiracies, particularly involving the Bush administration. Secondly, in the audience, there were other activists using Occupy hand signs in approval or disapproval of what was

said during the presentation, as these activists had taken part in various occupations around the country and decided to maintain the practice. Given that the Tea Party and Occupy are depicted overwhelmingly as being polar opposites, this was not only counterintuitive, but it also appeared paradoxical in the context of the contemporary political order and culture.

Consequently, PorcFest highlighted how its constituents, a wide variety of libertarians, not only clashed with the popular conservative and progressive imagery in the Tea Party and Occupy respectively, but also bridged a barrier many believed existed between the Tea Party and Occupy thought impossible to overcome. In fact, one will encounter a variety of people attending PorcFest for various reasons and yet they all seem to be able to function together. There are individuals who just wanted “to have people around” them that “care about each other and share the same values.”⁴ However, that didn’t necessarily mean that they had “to share all the same values,” since they also thought it was “important to develop cohesion with people you don’t necessarily agree with.”⁵ There were other younger activists who were there because they “ended up joining the Ron Paul campaign out of necessity- personally. As a whole the campaign itself was successful in reaching out to a lot of new people, especially young people with all the college tours that he did.”⁶ An individual who had presented at the center pavilion about Bitcoin⁷ stated the following: “When I heard about Bitcoin, I was just very excited about it. I thought it was great. It was a way to free currency as well as to free payments, because gold and silver are great as they are as currencies, but it is tough to pay someone an ounce of gold in China.”⁸

⁴ Interviewee Independent 9, PorcFest X, Lancaster, New Hampshire, 21 June 2013, Volume II, pg. 281

⁵ Interviewee Independent 9, PorcFest X, Lancaster, New Hampshire, 21 June 2013, Volume II, pg. 281

⁶ Interviewee Independent 10, PorcFest X, Lancaster, New Hampshire, 20 June 2013, Volume II, pg. 288

⁷ Bitcoin is a virtual currency that is based on a scarcity model. There is a set amount of the virtual currency created, with no possible increase. It’s scarcity provide it value. There will be further elaboration on Bitcoin later.

⁸ Interviewee Independent 8, PorcFest X, Lancaster, New Hampshire, 21 June 2013, Volume II, pg. 273

Yet, there were still other participants at PorcFest that one would not initially expect, such as the following activist who stated:

I got interested in this stuff and involved by means of the radical left and social anarchism. . Through activist work with a number of other anarchists and talking with a number of anarchists about anarchist ideas I realized that a number of the things that I had been dissatisfied with in some of the more conventional sectors were those still very attached to ideas of making change through political processes and through the state.⁹

The presence of anarchists, Ron Paul activists, and Bitcoin advocates demonstrates that libertarianism can act as an umbrella for many different facets of political activism today.

The most startling thing about all these examples and the setting of the PorcFest is that while there were Tea Party and Occupy activists everywhere, this was not at all obvious (except for the hand signals at the debate). There were no banners carrying the phrases “Taxed Enough Already” or “We Are the 99%” and there were no specific discussions or tents that focused on these two groups. Activists who participated or were still participating in both appeared to want to remain anonymous concerning their affiliation with the Tea Party and Occupy. Indeed, they seemed to want to be associated with other agendas or associations, like the Ron Paul Campaign, Bitcoin, or Alt-Expo.

The Tea Party and Occupy via PorcFest

The underlining question then is why is PorcFest able to attract Tea Party and Occupy activists and sympathizers simultaneously and why does it contrast so fundamentally with what one would expect of both groups and established politics in general? Furthermore, what greater insight can PorcFest provide concerning both that may have gone unrealized when confined to “left-right” politics? Normally, the Tea Party is

⁹ Interviewee Independent 11, PorcFest X, Lancaster, New Hampshire, 22 June 2013, Volume II, pg. 294

perceived by both critics and Americans in general as a conservative movement that is reacting to the election of President Barak Obama and the shifting demographics in the nation. It is also normally associated with the “rant” of Rick Santelli on CNBC on 19 February 2009, with many Tea Party activists citing it as inspiration.¹⁰ With Santelli’s emphasis on some people recklessly borrowing money that lead to having the rest of the country, who was implied to be of higher moral standing, paying for their mistakes, a tone was set that went on to define all Tea Party organizations. It would explain the emergence of such leaders like Sarah Palin and Dick Armey along with alliances with organizations such as Americans for Prosperity and FreedomWorks. While Tea Party organizations only represented a minority of the country (only approximately 25% of Americans when considering activists and passive participants), it carried a massive impact because of the environment of despair and distrust that arose during the recession of 2008-2009.¹¹

It is also often associated with the “Christian Right,” which implies that most Tea Party members are interested in enforcing a moral agenda through politics, a return to strict gender roles, and a general xenophobic approach to anything considered “un-Christian.” Furthermore, while it may be hostile to “big government” and in favor of free markets, the Tea Party is in general paired with the Republican Party in a combined effort to re-take the

¹⁰ Rick Santelli’s rant, whether it started the Tea Party or not, had a significant impact on the development of the Tea Party. “What mattered more than Santelli’s rant was its promulgation by right-wing bloggers across the internet and its repeated replays on the Fox Network. Within hours, too, FreedomWorks and similar Washington-based groups realized that their moment had come that the economic meltdown and the change from a Republican to a Democratic administration had created the climate to launch into Tea Party organizing. In early 2009 economic, political, and cultural shocks came together to activate ordinary persons across the country- mostly conservative Republicans, but also independents and others- to organize and mobilize. The internet, by now a routine element of political campaigning, was essential to the rise of the Tea Party.” Ronald Formisano, *Tea Party*, (Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press, 2012) pg. 27

¹¹ “Importantly, support for the Tea Party was growing during this period (2010), however, and support still surpassed opposition. Figure 4.1 indicates that 27 percent of Americans agreed with the group as of November 2010, compared to 22 percent of Americans who expressed disagreement.” Anthony DiMaggio, *The Rise of the Tea Party: Political Discontent and Corporate Media in the Age of Obama*, (New York, USA: Monthly Review Press, 2011) pg. 130

Congress and the White House in the name of conservatism.¹² Therefore, it would be unexpected to find individuals from the Tea Party at PorcFest, which included “a gay dance party,” flagrant recreational drug use, and the acceptance of any variation of gender roles, along with anything involving “left” in terms of ideology.

While these recently mentioned characteristics may be more in line with what Americans consider to be Occupy talking points, PorcFest holds many paradoxes as well when compared to the popular characterization of this group. For many, Occupy, or Occupy Wall Street (OWS) in most cases, represents a campaign against capitalist practices and the corruption of democratic processes, with a more collective approach to society. Indeed, Occupy had very similar origins to the Tea Party in that its message thrived in the environment that emerged because of the recession of 2008-2009 and the subsequent post-recession period. The difference would be that Occupy started two years later, on 17 September 2011, which meant that the public had more time to incorporate the events of the recent past.¹³ Therefore, attention had changed from an emphasis on delinquent borrowers and more towards the society that allowed the situation to emerge in the first place. This led to high profile individuals like Cornell West and Slavoj Zizek giving talks and attempting to lend credence to the claims and complaints made by activists in Occupy with

¹² This was a theme expressed in interviews when activists were asked about the Tea Party. “It became clear early on that the sort of the base line level was going to remain conservative and a lot of the people within the Tea Party in particular- there were very overt moves by the Republican Party. They were successful in capturing that electoral base and energizing people to vote.” Interviewee Independent 11, PorcFest X, New Hampshire, USA, 22 June 2013, Volume II, pg. 304

¹³ Occupy Wall Street participants choose to remember the first day of the occupation in New York as “S17,” which became the rallying call for one year anniversary at Zuccotti Park. However, Zuccotti Park was not the original choice for David Graeber and the General Assembly that formed in Bowling Green- it was Chase Plaza. This location had been closed off from the public. So, “By the time the Reverend Billy, a famous radical performance artist, had begun to preach from the steps of the Museum of the American Indian, on the south end of Bowling Green Park, it seemed like there were at least a thousand of us. At some point someone pressed a map into my hand. It had five different numbers on it: each corresponded to a park within walking distance that might serve as a fit place for the GA. Around 2:30, word went out that we were all to proceed to location #5. That was Zuccotti Park.” David Graeber, *The Democracy Project: A History, A Crisis, A Movement*, (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2013) pg. 48-49

their own criticisms of society. Again, similar to the Tea Party, Occupy had a relatively small amount of the American population in their activist ranks, but their message resonated with many Americans because of the wide-spread dissatisfaction within the state of the nation. It continued to influence public debate after the last closure of the encampments occurred in January 2012.¹⁴

Concerning the phrase “We are the 99%,” many consider this public awareness campaign concerning inequality in America to be a demand for some sort of redistribution of wealth and the initiation of a new “New Deal.” While not overtly political, the popular impression of Occupy is that it is largely a “liberal” movement seeking a pluralistic and multicultural approach that also pursues to expose the misdeeds of American society. To accomplish this, Americans assume that Occupy participants look to government institutions and processes to correct these problems, whether it is inequality, discrimination of any kind, or violence caused by privately owned weapons.¹⁵ If this is indeed true and represented the totality of Occupy, it would be unlikely to find Occupy participants at the PorcFest where there are discussions on the free market and alternative currencies attended by individuals carrying fire arms and the Gadsden Flag in protest of the federal government.

¹⁴ As will be explained later in Chapters 1 and 3, demographic and polling numbers on the initial protests were not as accurate or reliable as those pertaining to the Tea Party, due to the relative fluidity of movement in Occupy campsites, the early closure of some of the biggest protests, and pollsters failure to comprehend what was happening until it was too late. After the closures, many assumed that the Occupy association had ended and failed to continue polling about the various sections underneath this organizing umbrella. With that said, an Associated Press-GfK poll cited by the Huffington Post cited that 37% of the public by 21 October 2011 had supported Occupy Wall Street in New York. With only a little more than one third of the public supporting them initially (although it would grow), the actual active members would obviously be fewer. Laurie Kellman, “AP-GfK Poll: 37 percent support ‘Occupy Wall Street’ protesters; politics angers most people,” *Huffington Post*, <http://ap-gfkipoll.com/featured/latest-poll-findings>, viewed on 29 July 2015

¹⁵ “This is ‘I hate capitalism; I want this social nirvana. I am going to disrupt everyone’s life to make my point.” The Young Turks, “O’Reilly Rips Occupy Wall Street Protesters,” *YouTube*, published on 05 October 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UjLvHyvCkAg>, viewed on 29 July 2015

In fact, PorcFest exposes a misconception that Americans have with regards to the Tea Party and Occupy in established politics today: the impression that both were movements driven by a central ideology with a certain level of organizational hierarchy (even when considering the initial chaotic nature of Occupy at first). The Tea Party and Occupy were rather abstract concepts that acted as organizing agents for those who felt betrayed or wronged by the events before, during, and after the financial crisis of 2008-2009.¹⁶ These popular conceptions of both mentioned previously were actually separate movements acting within these organizing agents, with the new conservative movement adopting the Tea Party title and a twenty-first century progressive movement assuming the Occupy association. However, they do not represent the totality of all Tea Party or Occupy organizations, nor do other movements join or amalgamate within these aforementioned popular movements. Indeed, the conservative and progressive movements find themselves at odds with their equivalents also operating under the agency of the Tea Party and Occupy, presenting a contrasting and diverse image of both from the previous characterizations outlined above.

¹⁶ The term organizational agent relates to what Charlie V. Willie, David A. Willard, and Steven P. Ridini call "Complementarity and Social Organization." "A common way of life is maintained in communities or collectives through the complementary actions of the members they serve and their sacrifices for the public good. Dominant people of power try to advance the goals and objectives of a community or collective by serving others in a generous way, giving more of their time, talent, and treasure than they are required to give. Subdominant people of power attempt to advance the goals and objectives of a community or collective by sacrificing on behalf of others in a magananimous way that involves taking less than they are entitled to receive. Generosity and magnanimity are essential social actions in effective communities or collectives. These social actions, as well as rules and regulations, are accepted by participating members as ways of maintaining both stability and change in human societies." Charlie V. Willie, David A. Willard, and Steven P. Ridini, "Theoretical and Conceptual Issues in Effective Community Action," *Grassroots Social Action: Lessons in People Movements*, ed. Charles V. Willie, Steven P. Ridini, and David A. Willard, (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008) pg. 8

Post-“Age of Fracture”

This new realization of how we develop the image of both is indicative of how the latter half of the twentieth century could be defined as an “age of fracture,” to adopt the terminology coined by Daniel T. Rogers from the similarly entitled book. The Tea Party and Occupy can appear as post-“age of fracture” organizations for those seeking to find some unity, commonality, or purpose in American politics. As Rogers states in the opening of *Age of Fracture*, “Still if struggles over the intellectual construction of reality are inherent in all human societies, [Irving] Kristol and his contemporaries were not wrong to sense that they took on new breadth and intensity in the last quarter of the twentieth century.”¹⁷ As a result, “understandings of identity, society, economy, nation, and time were argued out in the last decades of the [twentieth] century.”¹⁸ The Tea Party and Occupy are more recent examples of this attempt to redefine what it means to be an American in politics and how to interact with each other. The common perception of both the Tea Party and Occupy represent an attempt to overcome this fracture and apply a collective identity, despite the irony that both Tea Partiers and Occupiers seem themselves as being distinct from their more mainstream counterparts. Despite this ironic position, there is still an attempt to incorporate these dissenting positions within the greater “left-right” paradigm of American politics.

In addition, the Tea Party and Occupy are the product of the challenges Americans have faced in the grassroots movements that have emerged in the twentieth century to overcome this fracturing. Given the unending struggles Americans faced, it was not so

¹⁷ Daniel T. Rogers, *Age of Fracture*, (London, UK: The Belknap Press, 2011), Kindle version, Location 25

¹⁸ Daniel T. Rogers, *Age of Fracture*, (London, UK: The Belknap Press, 2011), Kindle version, Location 25

striking to witness many grassroots movements shift from citizen based organizations to professionally managed institutions and advocacy groups campaigning on behalf of Americans.¹⁹ The attitude concerning professionals in government service had also infiltrated grassroots movement, removing citizens from active involvement by making them “political bystanders.” This professional orientation was supposed to relieve Americans and correct various “structural problems” that supposedly appeared, such as the relationship between grassroots movements and the media. While the Civil Rights movement proved to be an exception, one news editor explained, “Organizations [grassroots movements] expect media to equate social importance with newsworthiness. . . Acid rain, hazardous waste. . . they’re the kind of big bureaucratic stories that make people’s eyes glaze over.”²⁰ This new organizational focus, however, motivated Theda Skocpol to question “Shouldn’t we Americans wonder about who elects- or in any way holds accountable- institutions controlling vast resources on which so many ‘grassroots’ . . . associations depend?”²¹

Therefore, the intense debate amongst scholars that commenced in the mid-twentieth century, which still continues to our present day, concerning the perceived lack of involvement by Americans in community organizations or politics is not surprising. Americans grew weary of this causality loop and the lack of perceived influence. Robert Putnam argues in his work *Bowling Alone* that there was a decline in the “social capital” amongst Americans concerning membership in civic organizations across the country, with many feeling isolated from community life. Putnam further highlighted how “community

¹⁹ Theda Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management In American Civic Life*, (Oklahoma, USA: Oklahoma University Press, 2003), p. 163

²⁰ Charlotte Ryan, *Prime Time Activism*, (Boston, USA: South End Press, 1991), p. 31

²¹ Theda Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management In American Civic Life*, (Oklahoma, USA: Oklahoma University Press, 2003), p. 230

organizations were no longer continuously revitalized, as they had been in the past.”²² R. Claire Snyder argues in “Democratic Theory and the Case for Public Deliberation” in *Democracy’s Moment* that citizens were “angry about being ‘pushed out of the political system by a professional class of powerful lobbyists, incumbent politicians, campaign managers- and a media elite.”²³ Citizens were beginning to abandon their political system because they felt their participation amounted to very little, generating “a deeper set of accumulated grievances with political authority, institutions, and processes in general- grievances that cut across party and ideology.”²⁴ When Jeffrey Stout asked his son’s opinion about his book *Blessed are the Organized*, his son replied, “Maybe your book should be called ‘We’re all fucked!’”, which could be taken as an indication of the general mood found amongst Americans today.²⁵

Therefore, the Tea Party and Occupy highlight actually how this fracturing of society has continued, notwithstanding the prevailing common position, with three specific groupings representing differing realities when considering both. Moreover, libertarians expose another facet of political society that includes a shift in how Americans organize themselves and politically identify themselves. Those Americans who categorized the Tea Party and Occupy as just homogenous “right” or “left” organizations working for the established political parties formed the larger part of society who still adhered to established political categorizations and the larger progressive vision. Conservatives and progressives who joined either the Tea Party or Occupy, represented Americans who

²² Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, (London, UK: Simon & Schuster, 2000), Kindle Version, Location 125-127

²³ Snyder R. Claire , “Democratic Theory and the Case for Public Deliberation,” in Hayduk, Ronald and Kevin Mattison, *Democracy’s Moment*, (Oxford, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2002), p. 79

²⁴ Joseph S. Nye Jr., , Philip D. Zelikow, David C. King, *Why People Don’t Trust Government*, (London, UK: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 79

²⁵ Jeffrey Stout, *Blessed are the Organized*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 245

recognized the growing inadequacy of accepted political definitions and sought to rejuvenate them through alternative organizations. The libertarian movement that was present at PorcFest, as well as the Tea Party and Occupy, and also present in both represented a final grouping that maintained that the old definitions were both inadequate and no longer worth maintaining. While the new style of organization and ideas emanating from libertarians concerning political involvement may seem unorthodox at first, they are beginning to have an influence in how Americans view movements and political organizations.

By movement, the reference is to the above mentioned grassroots movements, which both Tea Party and Occupy activists have claimed to be members of with an enormous amount of pride, whether conservative, progressive, or otherwise. When approaching the topic of grassroots movements, there is an inherent difficulty finding an establishment to commence from because of the confusion concerning their existence. It is commonly accepted that grassroots movements are “locally based, significantly autonomous, volunteer run, formal nonprofit groups that have . . . volunteers and that manifest significant voluntary altruism.”²⁶ Building upon that definition, grassroots movements are also “living communities- dynamic organizations that are constantly creating and renewing themselves through member interaction.”²⁷ While these definitions establish a foundation to build upon, inconsistencies remain when considering that the impact of the internet and other recent developments in communications. These have become essential in the operations of grassroots movements, which have had the effect of rendering the use

²⁶ David Horton Smith, “The Rest of the Nonprofit Sector: Grassroots Associations as the Dark Matter Ignored in Prevailing ‘Flat Earth’ Maps of the Sector,” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, Vol 26, No. 2, June (1997), Pgs. 114-131, doi: 10.1177/0899764097262002, pg. 115

²⁷ Lori A. Bainard and Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff, “Lost in Cyberspace: Shedding Light on the Dark Matter of Grassroots Movements,” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, Vol 3, No 3, (September 2004), pgs. 32s-53s, doi: 10.1177/0899764004265436, pg. 50s

of the term “local” obsolete. When considering that the distance between individuals, towns, cities, and states has been reduced significantly as a result of such advancements, grassroots movements can easily organize across the nation with a decentralized structure that does not compromise nor dilute the input made by individual citizens. This was also a common assertion from activists interviewed.

The internet had a big hand in that. I now know a whole bunch of friends who live all over the world. It can be a great thing. I think some of the tools of globalization are bad. Outside of that, of course I think government is bad wherever you go. There isn't one that's good. So if we get rid of that and those people, I do believe that globalization would be a good thing. I mean, I don't believe in borders or anything. I want a truly free society where people can come and go as they please and it doesn't matter that you were born on this geographical location versus that one. People should be free to interact with one another.²⁸

Yet, libertarians are reshaping how grassroots movements, and by proxy the Tea Party and Occupy, organize and how we perceive them today because of their relatively flat organization structure, loose affiliation with other members, and an emphasis on diversification. These new grassroots movements not only adhere to what is described as “leaderless movements” but also take pride in that development because of the empowerment and the perceived evolution in political identity it represents to them. “Leaderless” doesn’t necessarily reflect the absence of high profile individuals in an organization, but more reflects the antagonism to the professionalization of grassroots movements mentioned above.²⁹ As a result of this flat organizational structure, libertarians also organize themselves around a rather flexible and porous membership system. Rarely are members required to take oaths, enroll on a register, and are free to come and go as they please with relatively little impact on their status within the organization.³⁰ Coupled

²⁸ Interviewee Independent 9, PorcFest X, New Hampshire, USA, 21 June 2013, Volume II, pg. 284

²⁹ A good reference on “leaderless” organizations would be Carne Ross, *The Leaderless Revolution*, (London, UK: Simon & Schuster, 2011)

³⁰ “It's very much a free association type of thing. The all has no official membership list. We have no way on knowing. There is no central entity to ask for permission to set up a network or chapter. There could be thousands of chapters for all we know. But, you know that could be the case. There's no central leader. I

with the flexible membership, they also hold diversification as equally important for their continued development. As long as one is willing to respect other members and interact peacefully, any background would appear to be accepted in their organizations if there were willing to accept the few common libertarian principles that set them apart. As a result, libertarians are furthering the “age of fracture” by allowing further diversification and creation of new identities, but attempt to neutralize the friction and hostility that one would anticipate with the term “fracture” with the framework of the Tea Party, Occupy, and PorcFest. Therefore, terminology like organizing agents, coalitions, or communities are better suited to these activists than the former term “movement,” as they emphasize more accurately the descriptions above.

In positing libertarians as such, the importance of understanding what exactly by a libertarian is becomes apparent when considering the Tea Party and Occupy. Libertarianism, in general, is an ideology that centers upon four priorities held those subscribing to it. The first is the principle of voluntarism or the right of an individual to develop their own life without interference or coercion and that they accept the same rights for others. The next is the development of direct citizen involvement in the decision making process concerning governance, which is a direct result of the growing anarchist sentiment in this new libertarian movement. The third priority is the freedom to adopt an economic model of choice, representing the greatest hurdle for libertarians to overcome in that this issue was largely what differentiated individual and community libertarians. The two strands of libertarianism in the United States arose from how they view the source of

happen to be someone who is rather active in the ALL. There's no leader, there's no real hierarchy like that. If you want to start up your own chapter, you go ahead and do that. You don't ask anyone. It's a good thing to let people know what is going on though- if you're going to start a chapter.” Interviewee Independent 7, New Hampshire, USA, 4 April 2013, Volume II, pg. 263

problems in society, which is largely related to property rights. Individual libertarians see private property as preeminent, while community libertarians take a more collective property approach (although not all community libertarians adhere to the complete notion of collective property. There are many free market activists, like those in Alt-Expo, that are still simultaneously deeply concerned with the abuse of private power). The choice of economic model is an attempt to balance these viewpoints.³¹ The final priority is citizen empowerment, which we witness in the Tea Party “libertarian coalition” and the Occupy “libertarian community.”

Anarchism, while often seen as an offshoot of communism, actually is just a subset of libertarian theory, with all anarchists being libertarians but not all libertarians being anarchists.³² It takes the notion that all individuals have a right to freedom to a higher level by claiming that everyone should be free of even the more basic institutions of society, influencing more activists in the United States to move away from the belief “that it

³¹ Most Americans have a specific opinion on what libertarianism is and it is more often than not the individualistic version. However, there are many different varieties of libertarians. There is a division in libertarianism that largely revolves around how libertarians view the problems in society. This emerged because of the parallel developments of classical liberalism in the United States and Europe. Classical liberalism, and by association libertarianism, has its origins with John Locke, who defined his theory in opposition to Thomas Hobbes. “Hobbes was so strongly impressed with the need for compulsion to maintain social cohesion that he could not envisage society without government. The dissolution of government meant for him the end of all order and restraint, the cessation of civilized living, and the return to the barbarous state of nature. Locke enunciates one of the principal doctrines of classical liberalism by drawing a sharp distinction between state and society.” What caused the divergence in classical liberalism and libertarianism was the emergence of Marxism, which will be elaborated further in chapter 4. William Ebenstein and Alan Ebenstein, *Great Political Thinkers: Plato to the Present*, (United Kingdom: Wadsworth Group/Thomson Learning, 2000) pg. 387

³² There will be further elaboration on the more specific forms of anarchism particular to the Tea Party and Occupy, but “while there are many different currents in anarchism, anarchists do share certain basic assumptions and central themes. If you dive into an anarchist philosophy, you generally find a particular view of human nature, a critique of the existing order, a vision of a free society, and a way to achieve it. All anarchists reject the legitimacy of external government and of the State, and condemn imposed political authority, hierarchy and domination. They seek to establish the condition of anarchy, that is to say, a decentralized and self-regulating society consisting of a federation of voluntary associations of free and equal individuals. The ultimate goal of anarchism is to create a free society which allows all human beings to realize their full potential.” It is noteworthy to point out that this is very similar to libertarian talking points, which further supports the concept of anarchism being a subdivision of libertarianism and not communism. Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, (London, UK: Harper Perennial, 2008) pg. 3

[Congress] could have a valid function” towards a belief “in a complete elimination of all forms of government.”³³ For these activists, the state or any other institutions that one would expect Americans to consider fundamental to society should in essence be abolished for voluntary options. Anarchism can be better understood in contrast to minarchism, which represents the traditional viewpoints on libertarianism, with activists tolerating the required minimum of state structures together with an acceptance of a certain level of organization in corporate structures.

The libertarian ability to transcend the current political order within the Tea Party, Occupy, and any other political organization they affiliated with was symptomatic of something greater happening within the American political system than just various partisans advancing their interests. The new libertarian movement is demonstrating that Americans are not only frustrated with the polarization endemic on the “left-right” political spectrum, but some are now also looking for ways to expand beyond it. In essence, PorcFest was one such manifestation of this desire to develop a new political order in the United States, which also existed concurrent with new abilities for Americans to actually realize their ideas. The new telecommunications network, the advancements in production, and the proliferation of alternate economies are all allowing libertarians to develop their own independent space in the American political universe that was more difficult previously. While the Tea Party and Occupy were not responsible for the foundation for such a development, they were responsible in providing the breakaway speed needed for libertarians to become independent and develop their activism for the future by providing the much needed outlet for libertarians to expand their numbers.

³³ Interviewee Tea Party 4, Houston, Texas via Facebook, 2 January 2012, Volume II, pg. 49

Indeed, the Tea Party and Occupy have provided the opportunity to reshape the perception Americans had of libertarians by offering the chance to display libertarian activism in contrast to the majority ideologies of conservatism and progressivism. Individual-oriented libertarians in the Tea Party promoted their abhorrence of morality legislation, their emphasis on free markets devoid of special privileges for corporate interests, and their revulsion for xenophobic tendencies. Community-oriented libertarians in Occupy were able to establish their very presence in American society and history that had been relatively unrecognized, their belief in the inability of government to solve the nation's problems, and their skepticism regarding representative democracy. For those who were willing to listen, libertarians were and are still attempting to display their independence in contemporary politics. Indeed, the identity of the Tea Party and Occupy appears to have even originated from libertarian activists seeking to accomplish just this goal.

The additional opportunity of the PorcFest to present libertarian activism outside the confines of the Tea Party and Occupy at one single event to those new to the movement displayed libertarianism as an independent ideology that existed united apart from the conservative-progressive divide in the United States, as well as the Tea Party and Occupy. This divide existed throughout the twentieth century because of the differing emphases held by libertarians on the source of most of the problems in the United States: either from the abuse of private or public power. As a result, individual and community libertarians made temporary or loose political alliances with conservatives and progressives respectively in an attempt to achieve their agendas.³⁴ In response to the disappointment of these

³⁴ The experience of the following activist highlights how libertarians were pigeonholed. "The typical view of libertarianism is that they will name some Republican. Like Rand Paul, Dick Armey. Secondly, you will hear

alliances in the wake of the 2008-2009 financial crisis, libertarians of all creeds re-discovered their independence from established politics and began to build a united activist movement to reinforce that revelation. PorcFest also buttresses the position of the Tea Party and Occupy as organizing agents in presenting such contrasting examples to the popular image. Furthermore, it reinforces the position that both are also post “age of fracture” organizations, with the libertarian movement attempting to normalize the “balkanization” of American politics.

This rediscovery was in process at PorcFest 2013, with the imagery outlined at the outset of the chapter suddenly becoming understandable in the context of the Tea Party and Occupy. PorcFest is a libertarian event that includes presentations and talks about popular issues and life styles that originally started as a primarily individualist libertarian event, but has now become more eclectic since the emergence of the Tea Party and Occupy. The activists mentioned at the outset were all libertarians, who believe that the individual has the right to believe and behave in any way they want as long as they are not aggressing against others. One particular example was the Alt-Expo group, which ran its own agenda in concurrence with the primary one set by the Free State Project. The two primary organizers, Jack Shimek and Nick Ford (the activist interviewed above), represented two generations of community libertarians at PorcFest 2013 while also welcoming individual libertarians to participate. Shimek and Ford also represented a type of “left-libertarianism” that was more of a fusion in individual and community approaches to libertarianism, in that their form follows in many of the traditions of the “left” but they also hold free market

something about taxes or some narrow view on government regulations, the idea is to let businesses do what they want instead of economic freedom for all us, which includes checking corporations. Basically, it becomes the think tank wing of the Republican Party in that presentation.” It was this same activist who early stated his disapproval with the left as well. Interviewee Independent 11, PorcFest X, New Hampshire, USA, 22 June 2013, Volume II, pg. 298

solutions as a basis for an economy. It was an example of the unification process of libertarianism in the United States that had accelerated after the emergence of the Tea Party and Occupy, with the foundation having been established prior to these agents.

Indeed, this unification process also has a larger historical context, as contemporary libertarianism has built upon the establishment created by previous generations that eventually led to PorcFest X in 2013.³⁵ While Americans may know “libertarian” activists like Ayn Rand and Milton Friedman, all of which are polarizing figures and would further be questioned on their libertarian credentials today, there have been other libertarian examples that represented a more inclusive approach.³⁶ One such example was Murray Rothbard who was prominent in the 1960s and 1970s and is claimed as a major influence amongst many libertarians today of various varieties. This history, as well as the trailblazers of the late 19th and early 20th century that introduced libertarianism to America, has

³⁵ While Hayek and Mises were seen as the beginning of the libertarian movement in the United States, there were other examples beforehand that push the origins of libertarianism to an earlier date. The Populist Movement of the late nineteenth century had both individual and community libertarian traits. There were also cooperative and collective movements throughout the nineteenth century that also give a historic gravitas to the largely foreign-influence strain of community libertarianism (John Curl’s *For All The People* is an excellent source) John Curl, *For All The People: Uncovering the Hidden History of Cooperation, Cooperative Movements, and Communalism in America*, (Oakland, CA, USA: PM Press, 2009) The American Revolution also produced many examples of the how individualistic strain of libertarianism originated (Alfred E. Young, Gary Nash, and Ray Raphael’s *Revolutionary Founders* provides examples of this development). Alfred E: Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael, *Revolutionary Founders: Radicals, Rebels, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, (New York, NY, USA: First Vintage Books Edition, 2012°

³⁶ Ayn Rand is admired by many libertarians today. However, she never claimed to be a libertarian and there are a few of her positions that would really find difficulty to be accepted in libertarian circles today, particularly on corporate protections (this will be examined further later in the Chapter 2). Rand’s works are a part of popular culture in American society. In *The Virtue of Selfishness*, she outlines her vision for government in stating “The proper functions of a government fall into three broad categories, all of them involving the issues of physical force and the protection of men’s rights: *the police*, to protect men from criminals- *the armed services*, to protect men from foreign invaders- *the law courts*, to settle disputes among men according to objective laws.” Yet, the inconsistencies to her theories as mentioned above demonstrates how far libertarianism has come since her writings. Still, she does have a place amongst classical libertarians. Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness: A New Concept of Egoism*, (London, UK: Signet, 1964) pg. 131 Hayek professes something similar in *The Road to Serfdom* in advocating “The state should confine itself to establishing rules applying to general types of situations, and should allow the individual’s freedom in everything which depends on the circumstances of time and place, because only the individuals concerned in each instance can fully know there circumstances and adapt their actions to them.” Milton Friedman’s role in the neo-liberal revolution and activities in Chile would disqualify him with many libertarians today.

furthered an agenda that has culminated into PorcFest 2013 as a result of the organizing effects the Tea Party and Occupy exerted on the libertarian movement in general.

Literature Review

The existing secondary source material is largely critical in handling the Tea Party, but rational conclusions can be reached none the less as a result of the quality of research made by a select collection of sources.³⁷ Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson take an objective approach that largely becomes critical in their work *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*, in that they witness many contradictions in their positions on government and spending. This would be in contrast to Jill Lepore's book *By The Whites Of Their Eyes: The Tea Party's Revolution and the Battle over American History*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2010), which makes no pretense of any objectivity. From the outset, Lepore's intent is to expose the Tea Party as perverting American history with misinformation or just plain falsehoods.³⁸ Christopher S. Parker and Matt A. Barreto are critical of the Tea Party at the outset with their work *Change They Can't Believe In*, but the data they accumulated allows for interesting conclusions.³⁹ *Steep* is a collection of essays that tries to bring multiple viewpoints to the Tea Party and largely succeeds,

³⁷ It is important to note that what is being considered as secondary material does not include those who produced works after direct involvement with Tea Party organizations. While they are not exactly primary sources (many just have a connection with the Tea Party and are not directly involved), they are also not secondary sources. This would include Dick Armey's *Give Us Liberty*, (New York, USA: HarperCollins, 2010) Rand Paul's *The Tea Party Goes to Washington*, (New York, USA: Hachette Book Group, 2011) and Scott Rasmussen and Douglas Schoen's *Mad As Hell*, (New York, NY: Broadside Books, 2010). The one exception to this would be Mark Meckler and Jenny Beth Martin with *The Tea Party Patriots: The Second American Revolution*, (New York, USA: Henry Holt and Company; 2012).

³⁸ Jill Lepore, *By The Whites Of Their Eyes: The Tea Party's Revolution and the Battle over American History*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2010), which makes no pretense of any objectivity. From the outset, Lepore's intent is to expose the Tea Party as perverting American history with misinformation or just plain falsehoods.

³⁹ Christopher S. Parker and Matt A. Barreto, *Change They Can't Believe In: The Tea Party and Reactionary Politics in America*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2013)

including some on libertarianism, while also creating an interesting narrative concerning conservative positions.⁴⁰

There are several other sources analyzed for this project, many more critical with some neutral or even positive, but all characterize the Tea Party as a “conservative movement.” There is one exception from Yuri Maltsev and Roman Skaskiw with the *Tea Party Explained*.⁴¹ In this book, libertarianism is seen as the direct source of the Tea Party and libertarian values as the core of the movement. This work is not a secondary work, but more of a primary source, as both authors were involved in libertarian and Tea Party events. Their take is interesting in that it has not been noticed by many, despite its hostility towards conservatism. Ultimately though, their research is largely centered on newspaper clipping from leading figures and the campaign of Ron Paul, which quite limits its scope. Despite this exception, libertarianism is only mentioned by the vast majority of sources as an extreme faction or as a petty source of friction with social conservatives within the Tea Party, thusly treating libertarianism as a defacto extreme form of conservatism.

Unlike the Tea Party, most of the secondary literature on Occupy is supportive when considering the positions of the activists, if not in the approach activists undertook to see those positions realized. Unlike the Tea Party, the brevity and relative chaotic nature of the occupations made an investigation into Occupy difficult. Therefore, an overwhelming amount of the information is reliant on participants in the occupations themselves. Some examples are Amy Schranger Lang and Daniel Lang/Levitsky with *Dreaming in Public: Building the Occupy Movement*, Astra Taylor and Keith Cessen’s *Occupy! Scenes from*

⁴⁰ Ronald Formisano with *The Tea Party*, (Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press, 2012) also provides insight, but was much too brief in its analysis. This appears largely as a result of the timing of publication, which was quite early in Tea Party history.

⁴¹ Yuri Maltsev and Roman Skaskiw with the *Tea Party Explained*, (Chicago, USA: Open Court, 2013, Kindle Version)

Occupied America, and David Graeber's *The Democracy Project: A History, A Crisis, A Movement*.⁴² While it is not impossible to find a more objective position on Occupy, it is more difficult than with the Tea Party because of the relative absence of independent observations and timing of events.

One example of the few secondary sources would be the collection of essays by W. J. T. Mitchel, Bernard E. Harcourt, and Michael Taussig in *Occupy: Three Inquiries in Disobedience*, in which each essay builds a narrative on what the protests were about through different mediums.⁴³ Another example would be *Occupy Nation* by Todd Gitlin, which is a general approach to the occupations via its history, evolution, and conclusion by means of the forced closures by the city governments and the FBI. More of a commentary on their positions than the occupations themselves, *Occupy* is a collection of essays from political scientists, economists, and sociologists. However, they all portray Occupy as a largely progressive or liberal movement seeking to enforce government regulation of capitalism via the federal government.⁴⁴ Moreover, it is important to note that many of these positions are heavily based on opinion and relate more to how the writers view the protests. Anarchism, and to a lesser extent libertarianism, is acknowledged as an influence with regards to the General Assembly and the policy of non-political involvement, but it was largely seen as a mere tool to foster a progressive agenda. *Translating Anarchy: The Anarchism of Occupy Wall Street*, by Mark Fray is one secondary source exception of the

⁴² Amy Schranger Lang and Daniel Lang/Levitsky with *Dreaming in Public: Building the Occupy Movement*, (Oxford, UK: New Internationalist Publications Ltd, 2012); Astra Taylor and Keith Cessen's *Occupy! Scenes from Occupied America*, (London, UK: Verso, 2011); David Graeber's *The Democracy Project: A History, A Crisis, A Movement*, (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2013)

⁴³ A more specialized, but nonetheless insightful work is *Occupying Political Science* from Emily Welty, Matthew Bolton, Meghana Nayak, and Christopher Malone, (New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Again, it is a collection of essays concerning the events at Occupy Wall Street.

⁴⁴ There is slightly more differentiation on the involvement of anarchism in Occupy than libertarianism in the Tea Party. .

anarchist element in Occupy, but it was largely ignored.⁴⁵ *The Democracy Project* by David Graeber was another example, but this was a primary source as Graeber was one of the first protesters.

Related to how the Tea Party and Occupy are seen as accentuating the polarization in “left-right” politics, an excellent reference to the emergence of the contemporary right or conservatism in the late twentieth century would be Theda Skocpol and Paul Pierson’s book *The Transformation of American Politics*.⁴⁶ Conversely, Paul Krugman outlines the evolution of the left or progressivism throughout the twentieth century in the book *The Conscience of a Liberal*.⁴⁷ Building upon the division between the “left” and the “right,” there have also been several works on how to restore a more “moderate” or “centrist” position to American politics and minimize partisanship. Examples would be Norton Garfinkle and Daniel Yankelovich with *Uniting America: Restoring the Vital Center to American Democracy* and Larry M. Bartels’ article “Partisanship and voting behavior, 1952-1996” from the *American Journal of Political Science*.⁴⁸ All of these examples, and other like them, lament the polarization in American politics and the “age of fracture” and discuss ways in which to overcome it.

Given the paradigm framework of “the left vs the right” and the supposed positions of the Tea Party and Occupy within it, a subsequent review of the secondary source material on libertarianism was done to gain a full understanding of the subject matter and the role of ideology within that framework. A classic work on the variety of libertarianism that focuses

⁴⁵ Mark Fray, *Translating Anarchy: The Anarchism of Occupy Wall Street*, (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2013)

⁴⁶ Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol, *The Transformation of American Politics: Activist Government and the Rise of Conservatism*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2007)

⁴⁷ Paul Krugman, *The Conscience of a Liberal: Reclaiming American From The Right*, (London: UK, Penguin Books, 2007)

⁴⁸ Norton Garfinkle and Daniel Yankelovich, *Uniting America: Restoring the Vital Center to American Democracy*, (London, UK: Yale University Press, 2005)

on the individual would be F. A. Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, which was primarily intended to criticize totalitarianism but nevertheless established a foundation for libertarian principles. Robert Nozick with his work *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* outlines a more anarchist interpretation of libertarian thought while also demonstrating that anarchism is not necessarily always connected with socialist thought.⁴⁹ Another classic work focusing on community libertarianism would be Rudolf Rocker's *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, outlining the theory of libertarian socialism and general anarchist thought during the Great Depression. Alexander Berkman with *What is Anarchism?* presents a more general approach to traditional anarchism in the United States and its ties with socialism.⁵⁰ Peter Marshall and his work *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* is a volume outlining the complete history of libertarian thought and theory, including American and other examples. A more modern approach to libertarianism and anarchism would be *Markets, Not Capitalism* by Gary Chartier and Charles W. Johnson, which is a series of articles that attempt to fuse both the individual and community libertarian positions.⁵¹ These and other examples provided further insight into the mindset and ideas of libertarians and allowed for an awareness to develop for what they sought to achieve in Tea Party and Occupy organizations.

Interviewing these activists provided a means to discern the role libertarians played in both organizations and how they related with the contemporary political order. Names and contacts were garnered through the review of YouTube videos, Facebook pages, and general websites, all demonstrating libertarian tendencies or declaring themselves

⁴⁹ Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, (Oxford, UK: Basic Books, Inc., 1974)

⁵⁰ Alexander Berkman, *What is Anarchism?*, (London, UK: Phoenix Press, 1989)

⁵¹ Gary Chartier and Charles Johnson, "Markets Freed from Capitalism," *Markets, Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, (London, UK: Minor Compositions)

libertarian in orientation. For the Tea Party, any association with Ron Paul, the campaign against the Federal Reserve, and associations with the movement Cop Block were all indicative of libertarians in the Tea Party. “Cop Block is a decentralized project supported by a diverse group of individuals united by their shared goal of police accountability.”⁵² With Occupy, any association with Noam Chomsky, any mention of open-source development, and the envisioning of a sustainable economy were signs of libertarian or anarchist involvement. With regards to open source economics, it is an alternative to the system we have today where information is licensed for use. However, after the information revolution, there was a new trend built upon the development of computer software that allows anyone access to use and contribute to the development of pretty much anything for free.⁵³ Other signals existed, along with open declarations of adhering to libertarian philosophy, but the examples aforementioned provided the best leads for libertarian activists to interview.

⁵² “Cop Block is committed to highlighting the perceived double standard granted to those in uniforms and with badges. We do this by raising awareness and providing support to victims of police abuse and other related institutional injustice. By documenting police actions whether they are illegal, immoral, or just a waste of time and resources, then agitating against the individuals responsible (ideally while recording and then later sharing), we can work together towards transparency and a real impact on issues of police accountability. CopBlock.org serves as a resource for education and awareness on individual and civil rights. We encourage constructive discourse and knowledge through the dissemination of different viewpoints and tactics in order to combat both the frequent violations of civil rights and the lack of accountability in modern policing.”

“About-Cop Block,” *Cop Block*, <http://www.copblock.org/about/>, viewed on 12 May 2015

⁵³ Yochai Benkler stated at a TED talk in 2005, “What we are seeing now is the emergence of this fourth system of social sharing and exchange- not that it’s the first time we have done nice things to each other or for each other as social beings. . . It’s that it’s the first time it’s having a major economic impact.” TED, “Yochai Benkler: Open-source economic,” *YouTube*, published on 21 April 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgYE75gkzkM>, viewed on 12 May 2015. As for a sustainable development, there is a strong link to open source economics, but there is a slightly different emphasis. “It suddenly dawned on me after all these years that I had forgot about something really important. That it wasn’t just about economies that can grow, and that growth will be distributed equitably, but that for economies to thrive and for humanity to survive, we need to live within the planetary boundaries. Economy, equity, ecology- the triple “e” of global prosperity and what they call “the holy trinity” of sustainable development.” TEDx Talks “Sustainable development: what, where and by whom?: Kitty van der Heijden at TEDxHaarlem,” *YouTube*, published on 21 June 2012 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sJ-uixn7Jg>, viewed on 12 May 2015

Interviews were conducted on a qualitative basis, as it was important for interviewees to relate the story in their own words, rather than just being statistics, and followed a general open-ended interview style.⁵⁴ Quantitative data collected by other researchers already established a rather heterogeneous make-up of the libertarian wing, at least in ideological terms, for the Tea Party and Occupy. Building on that data set, a qualitative approach was used by selecting libertarian elements from specific regions of the country to demonstrate an alignment of opinions and directions amongst libertarians in the United States. Each participant was asked specific questions divided into categories: introduction questions that allowed the participant to describe their activism in their own words, questions that attempted to ascertain a position in contemporary politics, questions relating to how they envisioned society today and how they would like to change it, and finally their opinions concerning the Tea Party if they were active in Occupy and vice versa. This guided interview approach provided symmetry amongst the interviewees from the various locations in different organizations to allow for a comparison and analysis on whether there was any coalescence in their activities and mind set. Finally, these interviews were conducted either in person, via webcam, or through Facebook via a survey, which permitted for the wide geographic representation.

The regional breakdown was contained to the lower forty eight states of the country, with Hawaii and Alaska not included in the research. Concerning the south west of the country, interviews were taken from both Texas and southern California, giving a rather

⁵⁴ There are several sources for interview techniques. One is Hollowitz, J & Wilson, C.E., "Structure Interviewing in Volunteer Selection," *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 21, 41-52, 1993. Another source is Foddy, William, *Constructing Questions for Interviews*, Cambridge University Press, 1993. One final example would be the pamphlet by Michael Quinn Patton and Michael Cochran, "A Guide to Using Qualitative Research Methodology," *Medecins sans frontiers*, last updated on 09 June 2010, <http://fieldresearch.msf.org/msf/bitstream/10144/84230/1/Qualitative%20research%20methodology.pdf>, viewed on 27 February 2015

unique picture of the region as both are perceived as polar opposites when considering political ideologies. For the west coast, there was a concentration on Oregon because of joint Tea Party and Occupy protests that had been reported on YouTube by activists and reporters. For the central and mid-west regions, a location in Iowa was chosen not only because of the strong polling presidential candidate Ron Paul received during his campaign in 2012, but also because of a report of cooperation similar to that found in Oregon. For the south, interviews were conducted in Washington, D.C. and North Carolina through research done on the web about organizations active in the regions. For New England, organizations in New Hampshire were chosen specifically because of the possible linkages with the PorcFest, which ultimately turned out to be true. Finally, New York City was chosen as a unique location because of the one year anniversary of Occupy Wall Street and the ability to at least re-capture a glimpse of the events that occurred at the end of 2011 once again. In total, thirty eight interviews were conducted.

Chapter Breakdown

In approaching this subject, there are three stages to the research that commence with the popular conceptions of the Tea Party and Occupy and conclude with the rise of a new united libertarian activism for the twenty first century that challenges the “left-right divide” in the United States. In the first stage, I analyzed the secondary material on the Tea Party, Occupy, and the modern political order and then compared this information with

primary sources on the internet, like Facebook and YouTube. The next stage was investigating secondary material on libertarianism, which involved understanding the distinction between general libertarianism and more specific forms such as anarchism. The final stage involved primary research, both on the internet and semi-structured interviews with activists, concerning the role of libertarianism in the Tea Party and Occupy and the challenge they represent to modern political order.

In comparing the secondary source material with preliminary primary source material on YouTube and Facebook, contradictions began to emerge in relation to the characterization of the Tea Party as a conservative movement and Occupy as a progressive movement. While there was ample evidence to support the notion of the Tea Party as a conservative movement, evidence of activists supporting gay rights, the rights of labor to organize, and drug legalization challenged that general perception. Furthermore, even with the many instances of activists calling an end to capitalism in Occupy, there were also several examples of activists espousing the virtues of the free market and the dangers of organizing society within state structures. Most surprisingly, the positions of these “unorthodox” activists seemed to coincide more with each other across the barrier between the Tea Party and Occupy than they did with their “movement” compatriots. This was further supported by reports and claims stating that these activists had in fact held cooperative Tea Party-Occupy meetings and protests against various government policies and societal norms. Therefore, these activists who identified themselves as libertarians and/or anarchists represented a paradox to the accepted definition of both the Tea Party and Occupy.

While each chapter has a particular focus, there is a common theme in each concerning libertarians evolving beyond the limitations that were either imposed or self-imposed on them throughout the twentieth century. The Tea Party and Occupy facilitated libertarians to realize that they were more than just a fringe movement dependent on other ideologies to enable any effect on civil society today in relation to their particular political agenda. The conclusion will revisit the PorcFest, after having established the following points mentioned above, so that the imagery and events occurring at this festival are understood for their full meaning.

To commence, it is important to outline how the Tea Party and Occupy are perceived through the current “left-right” paradigm of modern politics in the United States. Despite the claims of activists in both that they were attempting to rise above political division, Americans considered the Tea Party and Occupy as conservative and progressive partisan organizations respectively. In conjunction, they were seen as polar opposites of each other that largely disagreed on a majority of issues. These perceived disagreements were thusly seen as furthering the polarization that was also considered extensive in the American political system. Indeed, the Tea Party and Occupy were not only seen as partisan organizations, but they were also considered “extremist” organizations that pushed Americans to irrational positions. However, it was also the conglomeration of other minority ideologies within the Tea Party and Occupy, namely libertarianism and anarchism, with conservatives and progressives that ultimately led to this perception. Indeed, libertarian positions on government and left-libertarian beliefs concerning corporatism seem naïve to Americans, but once these libertarians were properly understood, it became

apparent that there was actually more to both the Tea Party and Occupy, as well as to libertarianism, than generally understood.

Subsequently the Tea Party libertarian coalition fittingly introduces the topic of modern libertarianism, as the Tea Party was the first to emerge and, for the most part, involved the type of libertarianism with which Americans are familiar. The Tea Party is introduced as an organizational agent, and not a movement, for Americans concerned and frustrated with the perceived abuses of collective power, which would allow any organization involved in any movement to adopt the title “Tea Party.” In this chapter, individual libertarianism will be analyzed, sometimes in contrast to conservatism, to demonstrate its main ideological points and how it differs from the popular conceptions of Tea Party organizations today. Not only will libertarianism be defined in relation to conservatism, but this chapter will also highlight how this variety of libertarianism has developed into two different strains: minarchism and anarchism. The anarchist strain is a newer variant and is largely connected with the above mentioned evolution, with activists completely rejecting the need for state structures and being hostile to all forms of legally protected corporate governance.

Upon establishing the Tea Party as an organizational agent and highlighting the existence of the libertarian coalition, the next step is to then focus on the friction between the libertarian and conservative elements that is leading to many libertarians questioning the continuation of the Tea Party association. The source of friction is linked to the 2010 election success of Tea Party conservatives, which strengthened conservative Tea Party groups and members and imprinted on Americans the notion of a conservative “movement.” Subsequently, the chapter outlines how libertarians adopted two approaches

to the perceived loss of identity under the banner of the Tea Party and the inability to get their message to others. The first approach involved members of the Tea Party libertarian coalition seeking to reclaim the name of the Tea Party for their own purposes by augmenting their activism with the general public. The second approach was to doubt the continuing association with the Tea Party and look to either create or find other organizational umbrellas to conduct their activism within.

After establishing the Tea Party libertarian coalition, the Occupy libertarian community introduces the next stage of modern libertarianism not so much in levels of degree but more so because of totality, as the libertarians in Occupy largely represented a different tradition that is rather unknown to Americans. To commence, the chapter outlines how Occupy suffered from the same mischaracterization as the Tea Party, maybe even because of it, as Occupy was seen more as a progressive movement seeking to empower public authority to regulate society. In so doing, another significant element has been ignored in Occupy, which is a type of libertarianism that focuses more on how individuals interact with each other than just on the individual itself, as did the Tea Party libertarian coalition. These community libertarians in Occupy will be introduced in a similar fashion to those in the Tea Party, with three sub-categories that involve the willingness to renounce private property: left-libertarians, libertarian socialists, and anarchists. Left-libertarians are more accepting of various forms of private property in concurrence with the notion of communal property, while libertarian socialists and anarchists are largely critical. Unlike the Tea Party, every subcategory of community libertarianism represents evolutions in American libertarianism, as these ideologies have never fully been integrated into public thought.

Presenting the libertarian community consequently highlights how the functioning of Occupy quickly exposed the incompatibility between community libertarianism and progressivism, which eventually led to libertarians isolating themselves into individual working groups. Community libertarians, very much like the individual libertarians in the Tea Party, approached the issue from two directions: confront progressives in the General Assembly or withdraw to working groups and formulate their own agendas. The second approach was the preference for many and truly emphasized Occupy as an organization agent, as activists were acting independently from one another within the same occupation or organization.

What PorcFest brings to the discussion of the Tea Party libertarian coalition and Occupy libertarian community is an example how the two libertarian factions came together to develop a joint and independent form of activism apart from the conservative and progressive elements in either the Tea Party or Occupy. The chapter shows how Tea Party libertarians, seeking to escape the characterization of the conservative Tea Party label, looked to Occupy to rejuvenate their activism. However, these activists from the Tea Party libertarian coalition experienced similar problems to that of community libertarians in relation to Occupy progressives. In finding their own virtual space within the individual working groups, they found a more welcoming home in the Occupy libertarian community. The realization of the similar positions between the Occupy libertarian community and the Tea Party libertarian coalition, led to the creation of a unified libertarian position. There are three noteworthy pieces of information that highlight the development of this newly united libertarianism via the PorcFest. Firstly, numbers have grown significantly in comparison to the first years of the festival, which witnessed only limited to moderate growth. Secondly,

the diversity in presentations, participants, and overall discussions has increased in tandem, demonstrating the widening influence of both strains of libertarianism. Finally, libertarians are more confident in their ability to complete their project, which is the creation of a “libertarian” society in the state of New Hampshire.

The conclusion of the project focuses again on the PorcFest, this time one year later at PorcFest XI, which is boasting a further growth of numbers that might surpass the previous year’s numbers. What appeared abnormal and paradoxical at PorcFest X in 2013 concerning the Tea Party and Occupy, is now understandable. More activists are interviewed, providing a further glimpse into libertarian activism as they move beyond the Tea Party and Occupy towards new goals and achievements. While there are still libertarians who adhere to old divisions in the ideology largely because they themselves were not involved in the Tea Party and Occupy, there are numerous examples of individuals who are trying to spread their positive experiences.

Through this analysis there are two conclusions that can be drawn from the review of all the secondary sources on the Tea Party, Occupy, and libertarianism. Firstly, the Tea Party and Occupy are not what Americans commonly perceive them to be, irrespective as to whether this is due to media coverage, biased research, or just an inability amongst Americans to understand them. They are in fact expressions of dissatisfaction with the current political, economic and societal order that appealed to many in the United States suffering from the Great Recession of 2008-2009. As a result, different movements have adopted the title of the Tea Party or Occupy, along with individuals believing different ideologies joining the same organizations with different interpretations to the causes of the Great Recession. These interpretations led to a divergence in agendas in response to these

events, creating friction between organizations adopting similar titles and sometimes between members in one organization. Consequently, considering both as movements is misguided and misses important aspects of the Tea Party and Occupy that provide greater insight into current American politics and society. Therefore, the concept of organizing agents has provided us with a new opportunity to capture the diversity of contemporary political affiliation in the US.

Secondly, after a century of developing as a philosophy in the shadows of conservatism and progressivism, the Tea Party and Occupy presented new opportunities to those who adhered to libertarianism. One significant reason why this ideology existed in the shadow of other ideologies throughout the twentieth century was because it had been divided by the definitions of the time. The economic recession of 2008-9 provided the opportunity for both sides to overcome this obstacle by bringing the Tea Party and Occupy together despite the common conception of them being opposites and show they existed apart from the current political order. The Tea Party and Occupy also provided libertarians with greater confidence, in that despite the general ignorance about their involvement, libertarian activists had remained committed to their values. This led to a relative increase in the number of libertarians activists in general, together with attention to and involvement in independent libertarian events across the country.

Chapter 1

Between public perception and radicalization:

The Tea Party and Occupy in Left-Right Politics

When approaching the topic of polarization in American politics via the imagery of the PorcFest, it is difficult to understand why so many view it as an insurmountable problem. If the Confederate flag can be flown next to the gay pride flag, then it seems that rather a process of reconciliation is slowly emerging. Furthermore, there were a multitude of viewpoints existing in tandem at this week-long event, suggesting instead that a political plurality had been achieved rather than an extension of polarization. However, when approaching PorcFest in an attempt to garner greater understanding of the Tea Party and Occupy, the question of polarization becomes an important issue as both have often been cited as byproducts of this process while simultaneously furthering it. The Tea Party and Occupy are perceived as examples of the extreme views of the “right” and the “left,” with “no two social and political movements” having defined “the left and the right ideologies of the country in the first part of the 21st century” as much as they have.⁵⁵

In fact, the popular impressions and commentaries concerning the Tea Party and Occupy are related to specific examples of high profile people, rhetoric, and activism. These

⁵⁵ Luis Quinones, “From Rallies to Results: How Mr. Tea Party Went To Washington and Mr. Occupy Stayed Behind,” late updated on 30 July 2015, http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:ZzbzdAgN7v0J:pol.illinoisstate.edu/current/confere nces/Quinones_From_Rallies_to_Results.doc+&cd=12&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=lu, viewed on 30 July 2015. This would appear to be an academic paper written on both the Tea Party and Occupy found on the web, but it was emblematic of how the majority of Americans view these phenomena.

don't exemplify the activists found at the festival and they often contradict the partisan neutral language of PorcFest itself. Tea Party activists, like Bonnie Sims, often declare that "... her parents 'raised her conservative and a Republican.'"⁵⁶ Many researching Occupy have related that "an opening for those considered part of the institutional left historically (though not completely) aligned with elements of the Democratic Party" existed for those seeking revitalization.⁵⁷ While these are common portrayals of both the Tea Party and Occupy, it contrasts with the relative harmony between activists at the event in New Hampshire and its overall message present as well.

Indeed, the original messages of the Tea Party and Occupy were partisan neutral, like those at PorcFest, but the attempts by many activists in both to work within the "left-right" paradigm of contemporary politics pushed a majority towards political affiliates and the American nation into perceiving them as such. As many activists were already self-identified conservatives or progressives (liberal), they affiliated themselves with conservative or progressive organizations and parties that dominated the national dialogue. As a result, Americans perceived the Tea Party and Occupy as being controlled by these two ideologies that were, and still are, diametrically opposed to each other with stakes in the outcome of established politics. These ideologies also received the majority of press attention that reinforced the impression of homogeneous Tea Party and Occupy movements working towards furthering the interests of either the Republican or Democratic Party. In the following chapter, the ideological core features of both movements will be introduced, the processes of radicalization within these ideologies traced, and it will be demonstrated

⁵⁶ Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 28

⁵⁷ Christopher Malone and Violet Fredericks, "OWS and US Electoral Politics," *Occupying Political Science*, ed. Emily Welty, Matthew Bolton, Meghana Nayak, and Christopher Malone, (New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pg. 207

how these corresponded with the public perceptions surrounding the Tea Party and Occupy. This provides the foundation to discuss the libertarian strands within both in the subsequent chapters.

Polarization: in perception and actuality

In positing the Tea Party as a conservative movement seeking to limit government and Occupy as a progressive movement attempting to instigate a new era of government activism, they are both constructed as polar opposites. Furthermore, when considering the radicalization experienced by the Tea Party and the paralysis of the General Assemblies in Occupy by progressive elites, which will be elaborated on later, the charge of furthering the polarization already present in contemporary politics is difficult to ignore. However, this charge rests on certain assumptions that are in fact misconceptions about both concerning the nature and organization of both political groups. At PorcFest X, these misconceptions become apparent, which further indicates that a new perspective is needed for both the Tea Party and Occupy.

Before the 2010 elections, activists in the Tea Party attempted to keep a non-partisan identity to appeal to a wide spectrum of the nation and to demonstrate that they represented an alternative to party politics. As a result of a growing number of high profile politicians becoming involved with the Tea Party name, the alliance of various Tea Party organizations with conservative astroturf organizations, and the sheer numbers of

conservatives joining the Tea Party, this approach changed radically by 2010.⁵⁸ It was during this period, as well as the radicalization process mentioned above, which not only gave the impression that the Tea Party was overwhelmingly conservative but rather irrational in their beliefs. As a result, there was ample support readily available for the Republican Party, itself conservative, in an election year that transformed the Tea Party from a partisan neutral protest into a politically charged wing of one of the major political parties in the United States. From the Tea Party Caucus led by Congresswomen Michelle Bachmann after the election of 2010 to the Tea Party presidential debates in 2012, Tea Party activism became inexorably linked to conservative politics.⁵⁹ As a result, any language used by Tea Party activists that included “popular” politics or working for the people became irrelevant and was overshadowed by the general conservative shift.

Occupy organizations certainly attempted to create a partisan neutral character, even if the popular campaign of the 99% did have an inherent political nature to it.⁶⁰ Yet, Occupy progressives certainly had political sympathies when investigating past the surface

⁵⁸ The Tea Party effect in the 2010 election for the Republican Party was substantial (although not as extensive as indicated by some). “The emergence of the Tea Party resulted in the rebranding of the opposition to President Obama and the Democrats. The Republicans’ own name had been tarnished by a four letter word: Bush. The anti-Bush fervor that swept the Democrats into control of Congress in 2006 and Obama into the White House in 2008 owed much to reaction to the Bush administration and Republican policies that had enlarged deficits and debt. . . The Tea Party’s eruption into the political arena purified the Republican brand by directing public memory and media attention away from frustration and anger with the Bush administration. Indeed the party of anger succeeded in channeling some of that reaction against the new Democratic administration, which inherited so many difficulties from the Bush-Cheney years.” Ronald Formisano, *The Tea Party*, (Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press, 2012), pg. 47

⁵⁹ Paul Steet and Anthony DiMaggio noted this in their book *Crashing the Tea Party*, with the quote “The Tea Party is not a social movement, but rather a loose conglomeration of partisan interest groups set on returning the Republican Party to power. Despite protestations to the contrary, the Tea Party is astroturf and partisan Republican to the core.” Paul Street and Anthony DiMaggio, *Crashing the Tea Party: Mass Media and the Campaign to Remake American Politics*, (London, UK: Paradigm Publishers, 2011) pg. 10

⁶⁰ Occupy was often associated with “class warfare” and some activists even embraced the idea. “According the mainstream American political discourse, there is no class divide, let alone class struggle. The Right likes to speak of ‘class warfare’ whenever people organize from below, but ignores the fact that ‘class struggle’ is going on whenever tax-cuts for the rich are enacted or cuts to entitlements are pushed through.” Nicholas Smaligo, *The Occupy Movement Explained: From Corporate Control to Democracy*, (Chicago, USA: Open Court, 2014), pg. 21

level that translates further into more partisan objectives. While the linkage with MoveOn.org and AdBusters has been exaggerated by critics, progressives attending the occupations had either traditions with these or related organizations or were simultaneously participating in both.⁶¹ Both were involved in the beginning of Occupy Wall Street, with Adbusters advertising the event on the famous poster with Wall Street bull and a ballerina on top and MoveOn partially became involved later. For instance, MoveOn became involved with Occupy in Oregon, as stated in an interview with a participant.⁶²

Furthermore, they were extremely supportive of politicians like Elizabeth Warren, who were “very much” members of the Democratic Party.⁶³ Deferring to specialist non-profit organizations and sympathetic politicians was very much in character of Occupy progressives, who were skeptical of the ability of the American public to decide the correct course of action. Despite the frustration with the Obama administration and Congress in how they reacted and dealt with the financial crisis of 2008-09, Occupy progressives still found it difficult to shed all partisan links and eventually became de facto grassroots operates for the Democratic Party and established progressive organizations like MoveOn.org. Their connection became palpable when President Obama eventually

⁶¹ The mission statement for AdBusters is the following: “We are a global network of artists, activists, writers, pranksters, students, educators and entrepreneurs who want to advance the new social activist movement of the information age. Our aim is to topple existing power structures and forge a major shift in the way we live in the 21st century.” “About-Adbusters,” *Adbusters*, <https://www.adbusters.org/about/adbusters>, viewed 3 May 2015 The mission statement for MoveOn.org is the following: “MoveOn is a community of more than 8 million Americans from all walks of life who use innovative technology to lead, participate in, and win campaigns for progressive change.” “What is MoveOn?” *MoveOn.org*, <http://front.moveon.org/about/#.VUZyyfnohtw>, viewed on 3 May 2015 AdBusters was the one who posted the advertisement to “Occupy Wall Street.”

⁶² Interviewee Independent 4, Oregon, USA- via Skype, 3 December 2012, Volume II, pg. 237

⁶³ “Three of those [Democratic] candidates endorsed by PCCC [Progressive Change Campaign Committee] also showed up on a list ‘10 Occupy Candidates Running for Congress’ identified by *Mother Jones*’ Josh Harkinson in March 2012. . . A fourth ‘Occupy candidate identified by *Mother Jones*’ was not endorsed by PCCC, but was featured (along with Massachusetts Senate candidate Elizabeth Warren, a *Mother Jones* and PCCC favorite) in the launch of another organization initiated on the institutional left.” In fact “all of these candidates ran or are running as Democrats.” Christopher Malone and Violet Fredericks, “OWS and US Electoral Politics,” *Occupying Political Science*, ed. Emily Welty, Matthew Bolton, Meghana Nayak, and Christopher Malone, (New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pg. 207

centered his 2012 campaign upon the subject of income inequality that echoed the protests of “We are the 99%.”

The perception of both as partisan affiliates was accentuated by the belief that progressives and conservatives in Occupy and the Tea Party had animosity towards each other. There were numerous articles and reports highlighting each as “partisan” opposites seeking to promote the values of the established parties. One example would be the following report from the Huffington Post: “The ideology is different ... I do think it is safe to say that in terms of positions on social issues and what The United States should be about and stand for, the Tea Party probably bends strong right while the Occupy Wall Street crew leans mightily to the left.”⁶⁴ Not only did the media posit the Tea Party and Occupy as partisans facing off in a political battle, but they actually contributed to this separation by projecting their own views on each. One example would be from FoxNews, in which a guest with Sean Hannity stated, with strong implications, the following quotation: “The Tea Party has a huge victory in 2010 . . . On Labor Day [2011]; you have ‘Jimmy Hoffa’ saying to president Obama- ‘This is your army.’ On September 17, Occupy starts in Zuccotti Park. It didn’t just appear.”⁶⁵ Another example was from MSNBC, with the quote from the “Count Down with Keith Olbermann: “The Tea Bagger[s] are full throated about their goals. They

⁶⁴ Bruce Reyes-Chow, “The Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street Movements: Similarities and Differences,” *Huffington Post*, published on 1 November 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bruce-reyeschow/tea-party-occupy-movement_b_1062824.html, viewed 24 April 2014

⁶⁵ Vonveezil2, “Hannity: Occupy UnMasked- YouTube,” *YouTube*, published on 26 April 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwkG-u4zbAU>, viewed on 24 April 2015 This in fact was an interview with film makers concerning the supposed conspiracy behind the development of Occupy.

want to give President Obama a strong tongue lashing and lick government spending that they did not oppose when they were under Presidents Bush and Reagan.”⁶⁶

This animosity was not unique and it could also be found amongst participants in both the Tea Party and Occupy towards their “counterparts.” When a Tea Party activist claims that, “I don’t think it [Occupy] really is a movement. It’s a sponsored movement,” the antagonism is obvious.⁶⁷ It is also palpable amongst Occupy activists stating, “If you are like me and you see the Tea Party on television and the news all the time, and you wonder why the hell isn’t there a radical left answer to the Tea Party, you should be here.”⁶⁸ Therefore, this partisanship is not only a perception of outsiders, but it appears that many participants were also adhering to this belief that the “other” was a political tool, or even a spearhead, for a new political agenda.

The Tea Party

Therefore, the Tea Party is considered to be an expression of an extreme form of conservatism in the United States that built upon the conservative surge that started in the 1970s.⁶⁹ What posits the Tea Party as such relates to the popular three principles of the

⁶⁶ RepublicanRanting “MSNBC’s Countdown with Keith Olbermann Coverage of the Tax Day Tea Party Protests-YouTube,” *YouTube*, published on 28 November 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huExrkOIUWQ>, viewed on 24 April 2015

⁶⁷ Interviewee Tea Party 2, Kolbert Park, Brooklyn, New York, 3 September 2012, Volume II, pg. 31

⁶⁸ Michael Scherer “Occupy Wall Street: A Tea Party for the Left? – TIME.com,” *Time*, 3 October 2011, <http://swampland.time.com/2011/10/03/occupy-wall-street-a-tea-party-for-the-left/>, viewed 3 May 2015

⁶⁹ “Amid all of this, partisan and ideological balances have been upended. In the 1960s and early 1970s, liberals and Democrats briefly held sway, prompting federal activism on behalf of citizen rights and economic regulation. Subsequently, conservatives successfully mobilized people and ideas to counter liberal practices and limit- or, more often, refocus and redirect- activist government.” Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol, “American Politics in the Long Run,” *The Transformation of American Politics: Activist Government and the Rise of Conservatism*, ed. Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2007), pg. 3

conservative leaning Tea Party Patriots These three principles are the following: constitutionally limited government, free markets, and fiscal responsibility. While these principles may seem acceptable to many Americans, Tea Party conservatives are perceived as attempting to use these principles in conjunction with a radical agenda that relates to a corporate controlled political process, the dominance of Christianity over societal relations, and a rather authoritarian take on governmental processes. The alliance of Tea Party activists with organizations like FreedomWorks and conservative think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation support this perception amongst Americans.

Tea Party conservatism is challenging because it invokes strong opinions from both supporters and critics that are not necessarily based completely on factual information. John M. O'Hara is one example of the proselytizing drive in stating, "The tea parties of April 2009 led to positive permutations of political activism beyond anyone's imagination."⁷⁰ James Taranto, editor from the Wall Street Journal, echoed the sentiment of O'Hara in claiming the Tea Party to be "a remarkable broad-based and non-ideological movement-one that has gained strength as the Democrats who currently run Washington have proved themselves to be narrow and ideological."⁷¹ Yet, Nancy Pelosi, former Speaker of the House of Representatives, declared, "This initiative is funded by the high end- we call it Astroturf, it's not really a grassroots movement. It's Astroturf by some of the wealthiest people in America to keep the focus on tax cuts for the rich instead of for the great middle class."⁷² Thusly, it is important to build upon the objective approach taken by some towards

⁷⁰ John O'Hara, *The New American Tea Party*, (New Jersey, USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010)

⁷¹ James Taranto, 'Strange New Respect,' *Wall Street Journal*, 5 April 2010, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304017404575165793481404002>, viewed on 30 July 2015

⁷² Brian Beutler, "Pelosi: This Is Astroturf, Not Grassroots Protest," *Talkingpointsmemo.com*, 15 April 2009, <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/dc/pelosi-this-is-astroturf-not-grassroots-protest>, viewed 20 May 2012

discovering who constitutes Tea Party conservative organizations and what their motivations are.

Many consider the subsequent organizations to be comprised of white men, largely uneducated, highly religious, and of modest means. The majority of all Tea Party activists and supporters are indeed mostly ethnically white and largely originating from middle class and upper middle class backgrounds.⁷³ While the attributed image of ignorant white males from the southern and mid-western sections of the country persists, Tea Party members and supporters are not exact replicas of past “conservative” phenomena (e.g. the John Birch Society). Women actually play a crucial role in the organization of the phenomenon, with more women involved than men in some locations.⁷⁴ Also, while the majority of activists are predominantly white, there are minorities that join Tea Party organizations that are often ignored when demographics are addressed.⁷⁵ Finally, Tea Party members appear to

⁷³ Christopher S. Parker and Matt Barreto highlight in *Change They Can't Believe In* that 84% of Tea Party activists were white, 66% are older than 45 years old, and 48% have an income of more than USD 60,000 a year. Christopher S. Parker and Matt A. Barreto, *Change They Can't Believe In: The Tea Party and Reactionary Politics in America*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2013) p. 288. Paul Street and Anthony DiMaggio in *Crashing the Tea Party* presented that 91% of the Tea Party was white, 72% were older than 51 years old, and 66% earned more than USD 50,000 a year. Paul Street and Anthony *Crashing the Tea Party: Mass Media and the Campaign to Remake American Politics*, (London, UK: Paradigm Publishers, 2011) p. 51. As these authors only considered the position that the Tea Party was a conservative “movement,” it is reasonable to assume that these were conservative activists.

⁷⁴ Two sources that outline the role of women in the Tea Party are Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson's *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) pgs 42-43 and Ronald Formisano's *The Tea Party* (Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press, 2012) pgs 57-58. In fact, Skocpol and Williamson discovered that most of the grassroots organizing was being conducted by female conservatives. Melissa Deckman also devotes a whole article to the role of women in the Tea Party. Melissa Deckman, “Of Mamma Grizzlies and Politics,” in *Steep*, ed. Lawrence Rosenthal and Christine Trost, (London, UK: University of California Press, 2012)

⁷⁵ Paul Street and Anthony DiMaggio outline in *Crashing the Tea Party* that 20% of Tea Party activists are not white. Paul Street and Anthony *Crashing the Tea Party: Mass Media and the Campaign to Remake American Politics*, (London, UK: Paradigm Publishers, 2011) pg. 81. Charles S. Parker and Matt A. Barreto outline in *Change They Can't Believe In* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013) that black Americans make up 10% of Tea Party supporters and Latino Americans make up 6%. Also interviews conducted with activists in New York uncovered a Tea Party organization with Jewish participants (Interview with Tea Party Activist 2, 30 August 2012).

be more likely to possess a university degree than the general public.⁷⁶ Therefore, while the popular image concerning the demographics of the Tea Party does represent to some extent member activists, it ignores important details that contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Tea Party conservative activism.

In recognizing who actually constitutes this Tea Party conservative “movement,” it is important to understand contemporary conservatism in the United States. While conservatism as an ideology has existed since Edmund Burke’s rebuke of the French Revolution, it has also gone through many reincarnations as other new ideologies have emerged since that time.⁷⁷ Today’s version of conservatism has developed in relation to the arrival of the activist state that seeks to regulate society for the benefit of the citizens that constitute it. “Conservatism is not a philosophy that yearns for what is past” and is not overtly opposed to the role that the state can assume. “It is a philosophy that devoutly wishes to never repeat the mistakes of the past.”⁷⁸ Therefore, Tea Party conservatives are not necessarily trying to hold back future development of society, but they would like to see that development evolve in a more gradual state.

⁷⁶ Street and DiMaggio also outline how 40% of Tea Party supporters are college educated, as compared to only 28% of the general public. Paul Street and Anthony DiMaggio, *Crashing the Tea Party: Mass Media and the Campaign to Remake American Politics*, (London, UK: Paradigm Publishers, 2011) pg. 51. Parker and Barreto go as high as 37% compared to 31% of the general public. Christopher S. Parker and Matt A. Barreto, *Change They Can’t Believe In: The Tea Party and Reactionary Politics in America*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2013) p. 288

⁷⁷ This is reference to Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. “Whether or not one accepts the tenets of his political creed, one finds on almost every page of the *Reflections*, epigrammatic gems of wisdom and observation that make his thought a permanent inspiration even for those who feel more optimistic about the possibilities of democracy than Burke did.” William Ebenstein and Alan Ebenstein, *Great Political Thinkers: Plato to the Present*, (United Kingdom: Wadsworth Group/Thomson Learning, 2000) pg. 512. Former President Ronald Reagan is viewed as the figure head of the conservative emergence in the 20th century. “Reagan’s presidency introduced, nationwide, a new public philosophy, one that made the overhaul and downsizing of the welfare state a central aim. In his first inaugural address in January 1981, Reagan announced, ‘Government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem.’” Suzanne Mettler, “The Transformed Welfare State and the Redistribution of Political Voice,” *The Transformation of American Politics: Activist Government and the Rise of Conservatism*, ed. Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2007), pg. 198

⁷⁸ John O’Hara, *The New American Tea Party*, (New Jersey, USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010) pg. 24

The origin of the conservatism found in the Tea Party originates from the stagflation of the 1970s that acted in response to the apparent impotence of progressivism to solve the problem, with Americans beginning to look elsewhere for a foundation to develop a world view upon.⁷⁹ Theda Skocpol in her book *The Transformation of American Politics* highlighted this shift in stating, “Overall, conservative voluntarism in the contemporary United States has revitalized traditions of community-rooted cross-class voluntarism that, prior to the 1970s were embodied either in blue-collar trade unions or in US voluntary membership federations that were not openly partisan.”⁸⁰ With Keynesian economics and activist government seemingly unable to reverse the stagflation occurring in the 1970s, Americans became more receptive to conservative ideals that were presented by politicians like Ronald Reagan.⁸¹ It marked the advent of a revived conservative movement that could question the validity of the activist state that had developed over the twentieth century because of the stagnant economy and the otherwise inability of those who supported Keynesian

⁷⁹ Progressivism always had a strong component of Keynesian economics within it. It isn’t that conservatism didn’t use Keynes as a basis for its economic model, but it was more from a lack of any other option. Stagflation presented an opportunity to change this situation. Progressivism will be looked at more closely when discussing Occupy in this chapter.

⁸⁰ Theda Skocpol, “Government Activism and the Reorganization of American Civil Democracy,” *The Transformation of American Politics: Activist Government and the Rise of Conservatism*, ed. Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2007), pg. 56 Julian Zelizer demonstrates though that these organizations were anything but non-partisan. “Because conservatives felt that they had been excluded from power for three decades, movement activists were keenly sensitive to the way in which institutions mattered. Although voters determined whether someone entered, conservative Republicans believe that institutional politics held a key to success once a person was elected.” Julian E. Zelizer, “Seizing Power: Conservatives and Congress Since the 1970s,” *The Transformation of American Politics: Activist Government and the Rise of Conservatism*, ed. Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2007), pg. 113

⁸¹ “Why did Republicans gain the upper hand on public perceptions of which party is better for the economy? One critical factor was that their economic message of lowering taxes and imposing incentives has been clear and consistent. The Democrats, by contrast, have changed their economic emphases repeatedly, have developed arguments more difficult to convey to voters, and have encountered difficulties settling on an agenda that satisfies important constituencies.” Mark A. Smith, “Economic Insecurity, Party Reputations, and the Republican Ascendancy,” *The Transformation of American Politics: Activist Government and the Rise of Conservatism*, ed. Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2007), pg. 146 Another source on Reagan’s administration would be Iwan Morgan’s article “Reaganomics and its Legacy,” *Ronald Reagan and the 1980s*, ed. Cheryl Hudson and Gareth Davies, (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008, pgs 101-118

economics to solve the issue. Upon the apparent success of the conservative ideology in reversing the stagflation problem, this fairly recently revitalized conservative movement was ready to challenge other aspects of the activist state that evolved over the twentieth century.

These other criticisms of the activist state become easily identifiable to Americans after the economic and financial crisis of 2008-9, as they became more receptive to these criticisms as a result of the United States resting on the brink of a new depression. Indeed, it seemed to activists that the very Keynesian policies created to protect Americans were in fact protecting those who created the financial crisis in the first place. The following activists stated:

I think that's what we saw in 2008- the centralization of economic power, probably like we haven't seen in a long time. At least a hundred years. That's essentially what happened. They socialized these alleged losses, they're really just paper losses they socialized, but it took real money out of our pockets and out of future generations pockets. So, they socialized that wealth up to a few Wall Street companies, who then used that money to consolidate and buy out other companies.⁸²

While each Tea Party organization may have used particular terminology unique to themselves in presenting these criticisms, conservatives used the Tea Party Patriots principles as their guide. These three principles possessed a broader theme for conservatives that related to restricting the ability of government from interfering in the national economy and raising taxes unnecessarily on citizens. While conservatives did not believe that politicians were ultimately responsible for the crisis, they feared that they would make it insufferably worse in their attempts to repair it.⁸³

⁸² Interviewee Tea Party 1, Vietnam Veterans Plaza, New York City, 30 August 2012, Volume II pg. 13

⁸³ Indeed, there was a also a large amount of anger directed towards banks concerning the role they played in the recession of 2008-2009. One example would be the following: "I am not going to go ahead and say we should have let them fail completely, but I think with the amount of money spent, with the amount of mid-level banks out there, thousand and thousand that ended up folding because they didn't get bailouts and

The first of the Tea Party Patriots principle of “constitutionally limited government” is a frequent topic of discussion amongst Tea Party conservatives within organizational meetings and outside with the general public. The constitutionalism of Tea Party conservatives is the application of knowledge, sometimes extensive, garnered by activists about Constitutional law to the functioning of government and the passage of laws.⁸⁴ For Tea Party conservatives, there is an absolute belief that all legislative bills and court decisions should be put under scrutiny by citizens like themselves to ascertain whether they are constitutional.⁸⁵ To facilitate this process, Tea Party conservatives held “Constitution classes” to educate activists and other citizens about the Constitution and its amendments to ensure an adequate knowledge to allow the debate.⁸⁶ They also believed that this places limitations on government, as citizens should check politicians and departments of government themselves to uncover any abuse of power. Ultimately, Tea Party conservatives see the Constitution itself as empowering citizens against the possibility of politicians, political parties, and/or specific departments or branches from becoming overreaching in their scope and preserving their natural rights. Ironically, however, there were no positions on reducing state structures other than a focus on certain programs and

these large banks did. . . So what you saw- these middle tier banks, thousands of them fold across the nation while the biggest ones had their largest bonus season ever.” CBS News, “Tea Party outraged by bailouts,” *YouTube*, published on 25 January 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LbAuobvbEk> viewed on 20 December 2013

⁸⁴ Constitutionalism provides another example of how Tea Party activists actually display an educational level that exceeds expectations when considering the media portrayal of them. Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 52-54; p. 51

⁸⁵ An example of this sentiment would be Dick Armey and Matt Kibbe’s stating in *Give Us Liberty*, “First and foremost, the Tea Party movement is concerned with recovering constitutional principles in government.” Dick Armey and Matt Kibbe, *Give Us Liberty: A Tea Party Manifesto*, (New York, USA: HaperCollins, 2010) pg. 34 Elizabeth Foley, a constitutional lawyer, stated in *The Tea Party: Three Principles* that “Tea Partiers believe that the Constitution is as binding today as it was in 1789, and the only legitimate way to change it is to pass a constitutional amendment.” Elizabeth Price Foley, *The Tea Party: Three Principles*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012) p. 169

⁸⁶ Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 51

services unpopular amongst these activists that are in actuality limited in their influence.⁸⁷

While the near sacred upholding of the Constitution reflects many public stereotypes about the movement, their focus on education classes challenges the perception of the movement as “un-educated.”

While Tea Party conservatives claim to support free markets, this principle relates rather to entrepreneurship. They see it as more central to the vitality of the American economy and passionately advocate the ability of Americans to initiate business.⁸⁸ This principle would be better represented with the terminology “free enterprise,” with one activist from Brooklyn personifying this emphasis: “If I want to hire someone, I can always go on e-Lance and hire someone from India to do it.”⁸⁹ Conservatives believe that government intervention in situations that involve new or small businesses is unacceptable, as it stifles their development. Yet, they are not resistant to governmental laws on illegal migrants, the suppression of labor unions, or the protection of intellectual private property, which would all be in violation of a free market.⁹⁰ They perceive the activities of banks and

⁸⁷ Tea Party conservatives do often remark about how big the government or state has become, but when it comes to cutting specific programs they immediately reverse this stance and support state structures. There only seems to be a consensus on cutting welfare programs for the unemployed and poor, international aid, and the salaries of governmental employees- including politicians. Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson in *The Tea Party and Remaking Republican Conservatism* and Ronald Formisano in *The Tea Party* present this reality quite well.

⁸⁸ Chip Berlet actually makes a poignant argument in support of framing the second pillar of conservatism in the terminology of entrepreneurship. According to him, “In fact, grassroots Tea Party activists routinely condemn the financial manipulators, ‘banksters,’ and treacherous liberal collectivists led by President Obama; who they claim are plotting to subvert the ‘free market.’ At the same time, as they praise the ‘productive elites’ they condemn the ‘parasitic’ corporate elites- a hallmark of right-wing populist producerism.” Chip Berlet, “Reframing Populist Resentments in the Tea Party Movement,” *Steep: The Precipitous Rise of the Tea Party*, ed. Lawrence Rosenthal and Christine Trost, (London, UK: University of California Press, 2012), p. 58

⁸⁹ Interviewee Tea Party 2, Kolbert Park, Brooklyn, New York, 3 September 2012

⁹⁰ One reference to the ambiguity concerning the Tea Party conservative stance on government regulation was highlighted by Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson. They witnessed that “Small examples aside, Tea Partiers are not opposed to all kinds of regulation or big-tax supported spending. Rank-and-rile Tea Party participants evaluate regulations and spending very differently depending on who or what is regulated and depending on the kinds of people who benefit from various kinds of public spending.” Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), pg. 56

corporations involved in the fiscal crisis as actually having inhibited entrepreneurialism in the United States and that direct action should have been taken by authorities to prevent or arrest this behavior.⁹¹

The third principle of the Tea Party Patriots and of conservatives is the emphasis on fiscal responsibility, which connects with the notions of entrepreneurship and constitutional limited government in that the citizen is responsible for the nation's well-being, as well as one's own. At a governmental level, there is great concern about the mismanagement of money, the enabling of inherently damaging behavior, and the further corrupting of the representative system.⁹² At an individual level, while Tea Party conservatives are not concerned with how individuals conduct their own affairs, they are immensely interested in how government responds to those they deem "fiscally irresponsible" and the continuation of that behavior.⁹³ This principle is closely tied to the supposed origin of the Tea Party with Rick Santelli's rant on CNBC mentioned earlier. Tea Party conservatives are worried about the loss of the work ethic that they believe made the United States great, the loss of independence that occurs when citizens become dependent on government subsidies, and, eventually, the erosion of the free enterprise system. One extreme example of this belief is the

⁹¹ Ronald Formisano has taken the lead in outlining this distinction in the Tea Party. He stated, "The Tea Party has a reputation- partly deserved- for 'hating' big business, and in this case 'big' meant a foreign corporation that was presumably undercutting American businesses. A majority of Tea Party supporters are opposed to or deeply skeptical of free trade." Ronald Formisano, *The Tea Party*, (Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press, 2012) pg. 72

⁹² Skocpol and Williamson also highlight this drive in the Tea Party by pointing out that "This moral social geography, rather than any abstract commitment to free-market principles, underlies Tea Party fervor to slash or eliminate categories of public benefits seen as going to unworthy people who are 'freeloading' on the public sector." While Skocpol and Williamson take a derogatory tone with regards to the motivation behind this drive, and with good reason, Tea Party conservatives are also making a political statement about independence and not relying on others to provide for you. Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), pg. 66

⁹³ Clarence Y. H. Lo also observed how "Tea Partiers had great animosity for the big-ticket bailout and stimulus programs that Obama launched in the face of the financial crisis." Clarence Y. Ho, *Steep: The Precipitous Rise of the Tea Party*, ed. Lawrence Rosenthal and Christine Trost, (London, UK: University of California Press, 2012), pg. 102

Tea Party conservative who believed that working two jobs was just for medical coverage. “The hospital sent me a bill. Ten thousand dollars. I got a second job; I sent the hospital one hundred bucks a month. That was the right thing to do. This (Obamacare) is wrong. People want something, they have to work for it.”⁹⁴ With the alarming deficits and the ballooning debt that passed into existence in 2007-2008, they feared that everything that was considered important for the structuring of society was evaporating because of what they perceived as irresponsible behavior.

However, these three principles do not address slogans like “The Zoo Has an African Lion and the White House has a Lyin’ African!” that have also become associated with all Tea Party organizations.⁹⁵ Some Americans would maintain that the primary positions of Tea Party conservatives were radical in themselves, but they did undergo a specific radicalization process that related to the issues of astroturfing, racism, xenophobia, and ignorance. One example of this process is the emergence of the Tea Party Express, which was a corporate/Republican Party attempt to use the Tea Party name for their own “astroturfing” uses.⁹⁶ Another example is racist disapproval of having an African-American

⁹⁴ Quote from George Egan in Jill Lepore, *The Whites of Their Eyes*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2010) p. 100

⁹⁵ McGrath, Ben, “The Movement: The Rise of Tea Party Activism,” *New Yorker*, 1 February 2010 issue, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/02/01/the-movement>, viewed on 14 December 2014. Other examples of racism and xenophobia associated with the Tea Party are the comments by Skocpol and Williamson stating, “By contrast, fear and hatred of Islam and Muslims were commonly expressed.” Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), pg. 69) and Parker and Barreto stating, “Still, for now at least, it seems that whether or not one supports the Tea Party is also associated with racial intolerance and a desire for group-based inequality. Christopher S. Parker, and Matt A. Barreto, *Change They Can’t Believe In: The Tea Party and Reactionary Politics in America*, (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013) pg. 93

⁹⁶ How to define astroturfing is just as difficult as trying to define grassroots movements, which is logical as the two topics are inter-related. In essence, astroturfing is an attempt to define organizations that want to be considered grassroots movement but are thought to be different by American citizens. A generally agreed component of astroturfing is an element of deception to followers and supporters, which would support the thesis that astroturfing Tea Party organizations are a result of the transformation of the conservative pillars. References concerning astroturfing include but are not limited to Thomas P Lynn and John W. Maxwell with “Astroturf: Interest Group Lobbying and Corporate Strategy” in the *Journal of Economic and Management Strategy* and Bruce Miroff, Rawmond Seidel, Todd Swanstrom, and Tome Deluca with *The Democratic Debate*:

president, which contrasts with the presence of minorities in Tea Party organizations.⁹⁷

One final example is the statement “Get your government hands off my Medicare,” highlighting the apparent disconnect that Tea Party members had with reality and betraying the educated background of many member activists.⁹⁸ These examples all represent a corruption of Tea Party conservative principles concerning society and government, providing ammunition for critics of the Tea Party to discredit organizations adopting the title.

This radicalization amongst Tea Party conservatives was enabled primarily through a devotional approach to American history that enforces conformity and quasi-obedience to authority. This approach developed in response to the growing relevance of conservatism in recent history, the relative unpopularity of the former Bush administration, and the Great

American Politics in the Age of Change. Ronald P. Formisano illustrates the main argument of critics that espouse the theory of astroturfing by stating, “The ties of the Kochs and AFP [Americans for Prosperity] to the Tea Party have been well documented. After recounting denials of Koch involvement by company spokespersons and David Koch himself, [Jane] Mayer provided ample illustration of how AFP and the Kochs had ‘worked closely with the Tea Party since the movement’s inception.” Ronald Formisano, *The Tea Party*, (Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press, 2012), pg. 69 The Tea Party Express was another example of astroturfing, which Formisano describes as “a faux-grassroots venture organized by a political action committee called ‘Our Country Deserves Better,’ which was originally formed in 2008 to elect Republican John McCain president.” Ronald Formisano, *The Tea Party*, (Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press, 2012) pg. 32 Furthermore However, David Weigel has demonstrated that the Tea Party Express did not enjoy universal support within the Tea Party Movement, as “For some Tea Party activists, joining up with the TPX meant losing the movement’s innocence. It meant becoming partisan, getting wrapped up in the mania of national politics, getting wedded to the GOP.” David Weigel, “America’s Tea Party Network,” *Slate Magazine*, September 12, 2011 Monday, Politics Formisano counter-argues the astroturf argument by citing one central weakness by stating, “Corporate astroturf groups that provide funds, training, and infrastructure for grassroots networks diverge in their primary goals from those sought by a large portion of Tea Party activists, ...” Ronald Formisano, *The Tea Party*, (Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press, 2012). pg. 67 Therefore, it is more likely that these arguments concerning the claims of astroturfing are, in fact, attempts by lobbyist groups to carefully orchestrate a planned protest to prevent the emergence of a genuine one.

⁹⁷ The presence of minorities in the Tea Party is a debated topic. There is much concerning the motivations of non-white members and how influential they truly were in Tea Party organizations. However, it cannot be denied that they did constitute a minority of Tea Party organizations that cannot be ignored. Christopher S. Parker and Matt A. Barreto outlines excellent demographic breakdowns in, *Change They Can’t Believe In: The Tea Party and Reactionary Politics in America*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2013) pg. 287-305

⁹⁸ Jill Lepore provided an example of this ignorance in radicalized Tea Party conservative organizations. She provides this anecdote: “Austin Hess had told me that during that very first Tax Day rally, on April 15, 2009, a reporter had come up to him and said, ‘So, do you hate Obama because he’s a Muslim?’ Hess said he thought, ‘Huh? Obama’s not a Muslim.’ He found the question maddening. ‘There will always be nuts who show up, but they don’t reflect the views of the movement,’ he explained.” Jill Lepore, *The Whites of Their Eyes*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2010), pg. 98-99

Recession. Since the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, conservative politics and activism had been growing stronger and more influential in American politics, leading Tea Party conservatives to assume a certain level of entitlement. This entitlement was challenged by the unpopularity of the Bush administration after the prolonged Iraq and Afghanistan wars and the chaos that followed the fall of the housing market in 2007. With an unpopular outgoing conservative administration, the Great Recession appeared as a challenge to the conservative ascendancy of the latter half of the twentieth century. The election of President Barack Obama became a symbol for the unfulfilled expectations and reversals that conservatives were facing at the beginning of 2009. This led eventually to a more controlling and authoritarian approach to American politics and society to reverse these perceived frustrations.

Therefore, while the Tea Party principle of constitutionalism does include skepticism towards governmental power, many conservatives accompany this constitutionalism with an “originalist” approach that is unerring and unchangeable. Originalism was initially a judicial method, but it has now become a historical method for radicalized Tea Party conservatives.⁹⁹ As a result, rather than advocating a limited government that protects individual freedoms, radicalized Tea Party conservatives tend to advocate one that enforces this “originalist” approach to history. This conformity then leads to a distrust, or even distaste, of ideas and/or people who deviate from this foundation, which would produce the xenophobic and ignorant tendencies much publicized about in the Tea Party.

Furthermore, the corresponding devotional approach to American history often turns into a worship, which then obscures the benefits of examining history from an

⁹⁹ Elizabeth Price Foley, *The Tea Party: Three Principles*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 169

objective position.¹⁰⁰ A subsequent side effect of this facet of radicalization is the fusion of this fundamentalism concerning American history with Christianity- or as Americans recognize it today the “Christian Nation” movement.¹⁰¹ This propelled many Tea Party conservatives to advocate for theocratic reforms (banning gay marriage, the displaying of the Ten Commandments in court rooms, etc.), betraying the first amendment and their equal support of constitutionalism. As a result, there was a subsequent backlash against the progression of equal rights, particularly for women, and an attempt to stifle scientific progress that questions or undermines the religious doctrines contained in Christianity.¹⁰² Also, corporate-backed organizations easily manipulated this conformity and control for their own specific ends by disguising their objectives with patriotic and quasi-religious rhetoric that coincided with the uniformity that radicalized Tea Party conservatives created.

It is this radicalization that has henceforth characterized Tea Party organizations and activities, whether deservedly or not. Even despite the partisan nature, conservatives did appear to offer a genuine attempt to exceed their origins and reach out to Americans of other ideological leanings. They also seemed to be sincere in their core principles in attempting to bring their fellow citizens out of the recession of 2008-2009. Their

¹⁰⁰ Often, a nostalgia is developed in these situations for a perceived past that in many cases did not exist or is greatly misconstrued today. One example would be John O’Hara’s quote, in which he claimed, “What appeals to conservatives about times past is the rugged individualism and personal responsibility that went along with them- characteristics that both predicated and encapsulated the formation of our country.” John O’Hara, *The New American Tea Party*, (New Jersey, USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010), pg. 25

¹⁰¹ It was this sentiment that Sarah Palin was trying to harness within the Tea Party. One example of this would be the following quote: “I have said all along that American is based on Judeo-Christian beliefs. Nobody has to believe me though- you can just go to our founding fathers’ early documents and see how they crafted a Declaration of Independence and a Constitution that allows that Judeo-Christian to be the foundation of our laws . . .” Gordon Fields, “Sarah Palin claims America is a Christian nation,” *YouTube*, published on 14 May 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ULvtFPkG14s>, viewed on 22 April 2014. Christianity is incorporated so easily because many view it as the foundation of American society, with the Pilgrims in Massachusetts sighted as an eminent example.

¹⁰² Indeed, it is a great irony that the notion of equality for women is under attack from radicalized Tea Party organizations, given that the demographic breakdown mentioned early highlighted a significant proportion of Tea Party members are women. It is just further proof that the foundational principles of Tea Party conservatives are severely hindered by this radicalization process.

demographic make-up supported these claims, as they displayed different backgrounds that were more representative of the national population than previous conservative movements. Yet, Tea Party conservatism expected others to conform to their ideals and to abandon their former allegiances. When other activists refused to give up these allegiances, it was then that the radicalization process and the alliance with the Republican Party to enforce conformity began. It reversed the partisan neutral character of their language and polarized their activities, leading to the much maligned paralysis in government and extreme behavior in society that has contributed the most to the popular perception of the Tea Party.

Occupy

In contrast, Occupy is viewed by Americans as the newest incarnation of progressive activism, expressing extreme anger at the financial sector and advocating greater government regulation. Indeed, the *New York Times* published an article called “The New Progressive Movement,” which opened with the line “Occupy Wall Street and its allied movements around the country are more than a walk in the park.”¹⁰³ The Occupy Wall Street encampment, the first, the biggest, and the most popular by far, included many activists who expressed these sentiments and that later went on to define all the occupations. What set Occupy apart from other progressive or liberal movements in the United States was the apparent uncompromising nature of their campaign against

¹⁰³ Jeffrey D. Sachs, “The New Progressive Movement,” *The New York Times*, published on 12 November 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/13/opinion/sunday/the-new-progressive-movement.html>, viewed on 30 July 2015

capitalism and those benefitting from the current economic order. As a result, many Americans viewed the positions of the “Occupy movement” as extreme and overtly idealistic (that is if their positions were fully understood by Americans witnessing the protests). Additionally, the impression held by many that the “movement” largely consisted of young college students assisted in propagating the extreme liberal or idealistic label and further caused many to dismiss the protests.

Occupy has been considered as often with sympathy as with patronization, never obtaining any serious consideration beyond the superficial support. President Obama is a pinnacle example of those sympathetic to their cause in his statement, “I think people are frustrated. The protesters are giving voice to a more broad based frustration about how our financial system works.”¹⁰⁴ A journalist from Pittsburgh represented the more patronizing sentiment with the words, “Who’d a thunk a protest movement composed largely of ignorant and arrogant rich kids with no coherent agenda who deliberately disrupt the lives of working people, . . . would become unpopular?”¹⁰⁵ Therefore, it is important to clarify who these progressive activists were and for what they stand. This will allow us to better understand how they could garner people’s sympathies amongst those very same people who were not even fully familiar with the Occupy agenda.

When attempting to determine the demographic breakdown of Occupy organizations, difficulties emerge as a result of the nature of the protests, but that does not preclude that a demographic make-up is impossible.¹⁰⁶ The popular characterization of the

¹⁰⁴ ThinkProgress6 , “Obama Supports Occupy Wall Street,” *YouTube*, published on 6 October 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aH99q2CRNZg>, viewed on 05 May 2014

¹⁰⁵ Jack Kelly, “Odious Occupiers,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)*, 27 November 2011, Sunday, Editorial, p. F-3

¹⁰⁶ It is difficult to find truly thorough empirical data concerning the demographics of Occupy organizations across the country because of the relatively brief life span of occupations across the country and the lack of

Occupy encampments is that they were largely constituted of students from predominantly wealthy backgrounds protesting policies and events that they could not comprehend. While there was a student constituency in various Occupy organizations, they seem to have been only a minority and the majority tends to have been activists older than the age of twenty five.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the majority of Occupy participants possessed full time employment, while a sizeable minority was at least employed in part-time labor.¹⁰⁸ Most importantly, the economic backgrounds of these activists suggest that they were anything but rich, with most earning below the national medium.¹⁰⁹ Yet, there was a large majority of activists who already possessed university education from the Bachelor's level up to a PhD.¹¹⁰ This would mean that while many were not successful in the conventional sense, these activists probably had, at minimum, some coherent understanding of what they were protesting against. Additional to the popular portrayal of rich university students ignorant of the nation's situation, they have also been described as being homogenous in their racial

knowledge amongst most researchers concerning where activists went after the shut-down of the occupations. What has been documented concerning the demographics is largely taken from the Occupy Wall Street protest at Zuccotti Park in New York City, which is not indicative of other occupations. As stated before, each occupation was unique, especially so with the Zuccotti Park occupation, and citing one as a reference for the all presents a rather inaccurate picture. Still, there are larger breakdowns across various cities that represent a more accurate breakdown of activist involvement and, for this project, analyses of Occupy Wall Street, Occupy Boston, Occupy D.C., and Occupy Oakland have been used as examples.

¹⁰⁷ A student from George Mason University conducted research on Occupy Wall Street and Occupy DC and determined interesting results concerning the involvement of students in the various organizations. In the survey taking, Occupy Wall Street only had 4.9% of respondents who were currently enrolled in university programs. Occupy DC had just 2.3%. Anandraj Singh Singh, "Survey of OWS and Occupy DC, conducted October 14th-15th 2011" <http://dl.dropbox.com/u/48911952/Occupy%20Statistics%20Results.xlsx>, viewed 4 September 2014.

¹⁰⁸ Two breakdowns of Occupy Wall Street in New York, while not indicative of other Occupy organizations, challenges this stereotype. A survey conducted by the Murphy Institute at the City University of New York found that 4% were full-time students, 6% were retired, 71% were employed in some profession, 60% were 30 or older, and 40% were younger than 30. Ruth Milkman, Stephanie Luce, and Penny Lewis, "Changing the Subject," last updated 25 January 2013, http://sps.cuny.edu/filestore/1/5/7/1_a05051d2117901d/1571_92f562221b8041e.pdf, accessed 13 May 2014

¹⁰⁹ The George Mason University report had a high number of low income activists within both Occupy Wall Street and Occupy DC. Anandraj Singh Singh, "Survey of OWS and Occupy DC, conducted October 14th-15th 2011" <http://dl.dropbox.com/u/48911952/Occupy%20Statistics%20Results.xlsx>, viewed 4 September 2014.

¹¹⁰ The CUNY study found that 80% obtained a Bachelor's degree or higher. Ruth Milkman, Stephanie Luce, and Penny Lewis, "Changing the Subject," last updated 25 January 2013, http://sps.cuny.edu/filestore/1/5/7/1_a05051d2117901d/1571_92f562221b8041e.pdf, accessed 13 May 2014

constituency- namely white. However, there were a number of activists who represented other racial groups who did participate in sub-groups specializing on minority issues within various occupations along with the activities within the General Assemblies.¹¹¹

With regards to the ideology, the majority of activists came from more liberal backgrounds and subscribed to what would be considered today as progressivism. Progressivism originally included many policies that were motivated to empower citizens to have greater control over the American political system in response to the excesses and abuses of the Gilded Age at the end of the nineteenth century.¹¹² However, by the twentieth century it began to adopt a different emphasis regarding the importance of citizen involvement in politics. This would eventually dominate Progressive thought and produce the antecedents of what we would consider to be “progressive politics” today. The sentiment concerning citizen involvement is encapsulated by Walter Lippmann, which Christopher Lasch outlined in the following passage:

“Democracy did not require that the people literally govern themselves. The public’s stake in government was strictly procedural. The public interest did not extend to the substance of decision making: ‘The public is interested in law, not in the laws; in the method of law, not in the substance.’”¹¹³

¹¹¹ The exclusion of coverage over minorities in Occupy organizations is actually quite a remarkable thing, as there was plenty of evidence to the contrary. In fact, the survey done from CUNY actually found that 33% of participants were not white, non-Hispanic, and the demographic breakdown done in Fast Company found that 19% of the same demographic. For this dissertation, the attendance of an Occupy Wall Street meeting was done shortly before the one-year anniversary, or S-17 as known by participants, and the diversity in the meeting was actually quite striking. It is further documented in *Dreaming in Public*, which is a collection of works submitted by participants that included “People of Color” section.

¹¹² The Gilded Age was a period between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that had a high level of income inequality in society. Coupled with this inequality, “there’s reason to believe that high rates of voter participation in the Gilded Age largely reflected financial incentives. Vote buying was, inevitably, most prevalent in swing states: One widely cited estimate is that during the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era up to a third of voters in New Jersey, which was very much a swing state at the time, regularly took cash for their votes.” Paul Krugman, *The Conscience of a Liberal: Reclaiming American From The Right*, (London: UK, Penguin Books, 2007) pg. 34

¹¹³ Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy*, (London: UK, W. W. Norton & Company, 1995) pg. 168 He went on further to state, “Lippmann acknowledged the conflict between his recommendations and the received theory of democracy, according to which citizens ought to have a hand, if only indirectly, in decision making. Democratic theory, he argued, had roots in social conditions that no longer

What this entailed was that while progressives thought of citizens as “stakeholders” in governance and the decision-making process, they believed it was better to delegate authority to a few who could foster a community mind set.

As the descendants of the original Progressive movement rely on the tradition established by Lippmann and others, such as Reinhold Niebuhr, the majority of Occupy organizations became centered on elite members to direct the organizations.¹¹⁴ This tradition was highlighted by the acknowledgment that “important decisions” were “happening in groups outside the GA” (General Assembly) and the admission by a participant “that he too was sometimes part of these behind-the-scenes decision-making bodies.”¹¹⁵ There were some Occupy progressives who followed in the tradition of Senator Huey Long and Father Charles Coughlin, with their renegade style of progressivism. However, both still held similar positions on how to govern, if not on how society should be molded and what policies should be enacted to envision it.¹¹⁶

obtained. It presupposed an ‘omnipresent citizen,’ a ‘jack of all trades’ who could be found only in a ‘simple self-contained community.’ In the ‘wide and unpredictable environment’ of the modern world, the old ideal of citizenship was obsolete.” Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy*, (London: UK, W. W. Norton & Company, 1995) pg. 169

¹¹⁴ “In both of these works [*Public Opinion* and *The Phantom Public*], Lippmann returned to the psychological theories that had long undermined his faith in the cognitive capacities of the average citizen, but he now combined that concern with his newly found dedication to a pluralist social theory that emphasized the essential incompatibility of the interests, beliefs, and opinions of the various sectors that collectively made up American society. Bringing these two ideas together, Lippmann damned his previous Progressive theory almost in its entirety.” Marc Sears, *Demanding Democracy: American Radicals in Search of a New Politics*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2010) pg. 65 “For [Reinhold] Niebuhr, the basic outline of an answer to that question was also wholly clear. Reformers must abandon any residual faith in the benefit of a dramatically engendered social harmony, recognize the necessity of coercion in politics, and think hard about how coercion could be channeled to the cause of greater equality rather than privilege. Niebuhr’s stated mission was to persuade aspirant reformers that they would have to think about political power anew.” Marc Sears, *Demanding Democracy: American Radicals in Search of a New Politics*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2010), pg. 73

¹¹⁵ Keith Gessen, Astra Taylor, and Sarah Resnick, “Scenes from an Occupation,” *Occupy: Scenes From Occupied America*, ed. Astra Taylor, Keith Gessen, and editors from *n+1*, *Dissent*, *Triple Canopy*, and *The New Inquiry*, (London, UK: Verso, 2011) p.54

¹¹⁶ Senator Huey Long was a democratic senator from Louisiana who challenged President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s administration on its failure to significantly ameliorate the ills of the Great Depression and called for a massive redistribution of wealth and a crusade against major banks and the finance sector. Father

While the origins of Occupy were not overtly progressive, it held the potential to attract disaffected mainstream participants from the institutional left that would eventually develop the progressive majority.¹¹⁷ The first protest of Occupy Wall Street in September 2011 was symbolic of the frustration that many progressives, liberals, and Americans in general were feeling in the perceived lack of progress being made in correcting the errors of the last decade. As an outlook for these grievances, Occupy represented a multitude of ideologies and modes of activism that were not necessarily synonymous with one another.¹¹⁸ However, progressives quickly emerged to organize the majority of participants that believed in the need for a renewed sense of community through state and established non-governmental organizations. They developed a cohesion that produced three defining critiques of American society and solutions for overcoming those deficiencies, contrary to the popular image of the Occupy Wall Street with no coherent message.

Coughlin was a priest who did a radio show that advocated similar principles, along with monetary reform. As Alan Brinkley stated the following concerning the support for both: "The bleak Depression winter continued. For the President [FDR], it was a time of anxious uncertainty. For leaders of both major parties, it was time of dire forebodings. For Huey Long, for Father Coughlin, and for the millions of Americans who were rallying to their banners, it was a season of fervent hopes and frenzied expectations." Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest, Huey Long, Father Coughlin, & the Great Depression*, (New York, USA: Vintage Books, 1983) pg. 7 However, both walked a fine line concerning authoritarian practices, with Father Coughlin having dubious sympathies with the Nazis that made continued support difficult to maintain. "They [voter] also turned their backs on mavericks like Huey Long and Father Coughlin, whose radical populism enjoyed a momentary vogue in some quarters in the mid-1930s. It was impossible, . . . , to reconcile the demagoguery, corruption, and willingness to employ force of Long and Coughlin with the American liberal and democratic ideas to which they largely continued to cleave." Marc Stears, *Demanding Democracy: American Radicals in Search of a New Politics*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2010), pg. 101

¹¹⁷ There are many origin stories concerning how the original Occupy Wall Street protest started. Whether it is referring to the Adbusters advertisement, the Bloombergville tents, or the meetings taking place in Washington Square, what is for sure is that the vast majority of progressives involved in mainstream politics were not present at this beginning.

¹¹⁸ "I saw Asian, Arab, Latino, black, white, native, and all kinds of folks, in clusters, twos and larger groups. I saw folks from 16 to 60 at least. I saw queer, cis, trans and straight folk in every style and scene and age, crusty-punk kids in layers of dingy denim and patches, college kids in t-shirts, union members in their union gear, medics in home-made uniforms with goggles and bandannas." "Statement: DeColonize LA, 16 October 2011," *Dreaming in Public: Building the Occupy Movement*, ed. Amy Schrager Lang & Daniel Lang/Levitsky (Oxford, UK: New Internationalist Publications Ltd., 2012) pg. 110

For Occupy progressives, the slogan “We are the 99%” was connected to the challenge inequality presented to the ideal of the American Dream, the notion that Americans can be successful if they are hardworking and dedicated. Their main focus concerning the “99%” was to approach and resolve the problem of inequality in order to allow for the proper functioning of the American Dream within the current economic paradigm.¹¹⁹ Conversely, it also raised consciousness to the fact that 1% of Americans are experiencing a contrasting increase in already vastly superior living conditions leading to the deterioration of living standards for the rest of the population.¹²⁰ The lamentation over the demise of the American Dream however eventually became a more morose expression of how Occupy progressives communicated the effects of income inequality.¹²¹ This would indicate a static society that represented more of a caste system and questioned the

¹¹⁹ “Occupy Wall Street has reshaped the national debate as quickly and dramatically as any social movement in American history. Before the fall 2011, America had no common language to explain the crash of 2008 and its causes. Now we can see and describe the chasm separating the 99 percent and the 1 percent. The Occupy movement might be mocked as naïve for lacking a specific set of demands, but it has brilliantly identified the one fundamental problem of our time.” George Gresham, “Occupy Wall Street: The First Quarter and Beyond,” *Occupy: Scenes From Occupied America*, ed. Astra Taylor, Keith Gessen, and editors from *n+1*, *Dissent*, *Triple Canopy*, and *The New Inquiry*, (London, UK: Verso, 2011), pg. 277

¹²⁰ Nouriel Roubini highlights in the *Occupy Handbook* that “In the United States, for example, by 2007, income inequality reached levels not seen since 1928, before the onset of the Great Depression . . . The share of income of the top 1 percent was 23 percent, having risen from 10 percent two decades earlier. The top 5 percent control about 75 percent of the financial wealth. The Gini coefficient, which measures inequality on a scale of zero to one, shows a sharp rise to over 0.45, close to or worse than that of highly unequal economies in poorer EMs (emerging markets). Nouriel Roubini, “Economic Insecurity and Inequality,” *The Occupy Handbook*, ed. Janet Byrne, (London: UK, Back Bay Book, 2012) pg. 152

¹²¹ Ronald Hayduk attributes the collapse of the American Dream to the various free trade agreements that were passed like the North American Free Trade Agreement and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. He also points out how “the pace [of] deindustrialization hastened [it] and its impact exacerbated economic and social inequalities. These developments, in turn, grew the low-wage service sector and contingent labor markets.” Ronald Hayduk, “The Anti-Globalization Movement and OWS,” *Occupying Political Science*, ed. Emily Welty, Matthew Bolton, Meghana Nayak, and Christopher Malone, (New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pg. 228 This all had the effect of shredding the American Dream by removing pathways used by working class citizens to enter the middle class. Todd Gitlin also approached the subject of the American dream in stating, “What happens to the American Dream when the middle class (which, whatever that may be, is the category that most Americans identify with) is squeezed and many millions doubt that they will be able to live half as comfortable as their parents?” Todd Gitlin, *Occupy Nation: The Roots, The Spirit, and The Promise of Occupy Wall Street*, (New York, USA: itbooks, 2012) pg. 54

political principles to which progressives adhered.¹²² This was the implication on the tumblr site called wearethe99percent.tumblr.com, which was where Occupy activists could post their experiences that contrasted with the concepts of the American Dream.¹²³

The second issue of concern for Occupy progressives would be the subject of citizen influence in the American political system, with a significant connection to the matter of inequality. For Occupy progressives, the ability of American citizens to exert influence on their political system is essential for the functioning of a democracy despite their concerns towards the limitations of such activism.¹²⁴ In light of the recession of 2008-09, citizens should have had the opportunity to lobby their government and politicians to provide stimulus directly to those who had either lost their homes or employment.¹²⁵ However, the stimulus plans and political support appeared to go directly to those who were responsible for the institutions and policies in which the economic crisis of 2008-9 originated from, leading Occupy progressives to infer that citizen influence in governmental institutions in

¹²² This position of Occupy progressives was rather ironic considering the tradition in progressivism established by Walter Lippmann concerning the limitations on democracy and the inability of citizens to participate in the political process.

¹²³ Marco Roth, "Letters of Resignation from the American Dream," *Occupy: Scenes From Occupied America*, ed. Astra Taylor, Keith Gessen, and editors from *n+1*, *Dissent*, *Triple Canopy*, and *The New Inquiry*, (London, UK: Verso, 2011), pg. 27

¹²⁴ Elizabeth Cobbet and Randall Germain express this ideal in stating, "We see the relevance of OWS to be twofold: (1) it is a manifestation of the declining legitimacy of the institutions most clearly linked to the current organization of world order; and (2) it is occurring at the core of global financial power, where the fit between ideology and practice should be tightest." Elizabeth Cobbet and Randall Germain, "'Occupy Wall Street' and IPE: Insights and Implications" *Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies*, ed. Amin Samman, Nathan Coombs, and Pepijn van Houwelingen, Issue 5 "Imperialism, Finance, #Occupy" (2012), pgs. 110-113 http://www.criticalglobalisation.com/issue5/110_113_OWS_AND_IPE_JCGS5.pdf, last updated 13 February 2014

¹²⁵ Jeffrey D. Sachs, an Occupy progressive supporter if not participant, argues this case in writing, "The basic primary premise of the 'mixed economy' is that market dynamism can be combined with democratic equality. Capitalism can promote innovation and growth, while government ensures that all citizens can secure their basic need for health care education, suitable shelter, and household income sufficient to preserve dignity and raise healthy and educated children." Jeffrey D. Sachs, "Occupy Global Capitalism," *The Occupy Handbook*, ed. Janet Byrne, (London: UK, Back Bay Book, 2012) pg. 466

the United States had dwindled.¹²⁶ After the passage of the Citizen's United ruling, which allowed unlimited funds to be injected into electoral campaigns, this dwindling appeared to Occupy progressives to have led effectively to their voting rights being nullified.¹²⁷ Occupy therefore became a further crusade for progressives to promote the liberation of the political system from this perceived corruption and restore it to the principles of the early twentieth century that many felt kinship with.

Connected to the concerns surrounding the lack of economic opportunity as a result of inequality and the neutralization of political power for the majority of Americans, Occupy progressives also hold the ideal of preserving some notion of social cohesion and a healthy environment in which a society can evolve. Occupy progressives remarked that the emphasis on competition, profit, and economic growth had provided an environment of mistrust and made Americans adversarial.¹²⁸ Their solution to these challenges to their

¹²⁶ The Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq issued a "Message of Solidarity with Occupy Wall Street," which included the following: "While democracy should guarantee all people an equal say in the decisions that affect their lives, you find yourselves forced to take to the streets, as politicians and bankers make decisions behind closed doors and hire an army of police to send you back home with nothing." Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, "Message of Solidarity with Occupy Wall Street," *Dreaming in Public: Building the Occupy Movement*, ed. Amy Schrager Lang & Daniel Lang/Levitsky (Oxford, UK: New Internationalist Publications Ltd., 2012) pg. 67 While this doesn't directly address the desire to see prosecution of those in charge of the institutions at the center of the economic crisis of 2008-9, it does outline the sense of outrage at the imbalance of influence and control that the finance industry has in American politics- a common trait in Occupy progressives.

¹²⁷ The subject of corporate personhood was a topic of debate amongst all Occupy participants, but Occupy progressives were particularly disturbed because it invalidated the institutions they found important for the governance of society. Susan Kang took note of the importance concerning "Citizens United" in writing, "A third demand clearly engaged with the state, making recommendations about the US Constitution. On January 3, 2012, the GA reached consensus on the 'Resolution to End Corporate Personhood.'" This resolution urged specific political change, particularly of the Supreme Court decision Citizens United." She then goes on to quote this resolution, which included the following sentence, "[We are] calling for an Amendment to the Constitution to firmly establish that money is not speech, that human beings, not corporations, are person entitled to constitutional rights, and that the rights of human beings will never again be granted to fictitious entities or property." Susan Kang, "Demands Belong to the 99%?" *Occupying Political Science*, ed. Emily Welty, Matthew Bolton, Meghana Nayak, and Christopher Malone, (New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pg. 81

¹²⁸ Jodi Dean recognized the reaction against this breakdown in social cohesion in noting, "'We are the 99%' also erases the multiplicity of individuated, partial, and divided interests that fragment and weaken the people as the rest of us. Against capital's constant attempts to pulverize and decompose the collective people, the claim of the 99% responds with the force of a belonging that not only cannot be erased but that capital's own methods of accounting procedure." Jodi Dean, "Claiming Division, Naming a Wrong," *Occupy: Scenes From*

ideals was to redefine how Americans approach community by redirecting the national emphasis from the individual to the collective good. While many may have understood Occupy to be a statement against finance or “capitalism,” the central message of Occupy progressives was this new sense of community that happened to include criticisms of finance and capitalism in general.¹²⁹ However, there was no inherent real drive to replace capitalism and the growth economy with something else, even if many progressives were eager to criticize the side effects of such a system. The environmentalism of Occupy progressives was itself a message of initiating a new social cohesion that supplemented the criticisms of modern capitalism.¹³⁰ Correcting these side effects would be achieved by using the existing structures of public governance or traditional non-governmental organizations that assist in the management of society, establishing a link with the original Progressive Movement of the early twentieth century.

Yet, the enduring connection to government and other traditional progressive institutions eventually led Occupy progressives into a perpetual circular logic, which resulted

Occupied America, ed. Astra Taylor, Keith Gessen, and editors from *n+1*, *Dissent*, *Triple Canopy*, and *The New Inquiry*, (London, UK: Verso, 2011), pg. 88

¹²⁹ If there is any doubt about the absolute centrality of community to Occupy progressives, the opening statement of the Declaration of the Occupation of New York City, a document heavily influenced by Progressive thought, is “As we gather together in solidarity to express a feeling of mass injustice, we must not lose sight of what brought us together. We write so that all people who feel wronged by the corporate forces of the world can know we are your allies.” Occupy Wall Street, “Declaration of the Occupation of New York City,” *Dreaming in Public: Building the Occupy Movement*, ed. Amy Schrager Lang & Daniel Lang/Levitsky (Oxford, UK: New Internationalist Publications Ltd., 2012) pg. 49

¹³⁰ Environmentalism has often been seen as a separate issue from mainstream politics in the United States, maybe explaining why skepticism concerning the phenomenon is higher there than elsewhere. While Greenpeace, PETA, and other organizations have tried to raise an awareness concerning environmental degradation, they have had limited progress on moving it towards mainstream politics. Occupy shifted that mindset dramatically by interlinking climate change with inequality, erosion of democracy, and the collapse of community, making it accessible to the majority of Americans. Naomi Klein was an example of the Occupy progressive drive to include environmental themes in their activism by stating, “We all know, or at least sense, that the world is upside down: we act as if there is no end to what is actually finite- fossil fuels and the atmospheric space to absorb their emission. And we act as if there are strict and immovable limits to what is actually bountiful- the financial resources to build the kind of society we need.” Naomi Klein, “The Most Important Thing in the World,” *This Changes Everything*, ed. Sarah van Gelder and the staff of Yes! Magazine, San Francisco, USA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2011) pg. 47

in internal conflicts. Originally, progressives thought governmental institutions could be prevented from being a tool for only the wealthy and used for the benefit of the nation as a whole. However, there was a growing belief early in the twentieth century that Americans would not support progressive proposals and rather pursue individualist goals that would run contrary to the collective-community identity that progressives wanted to create.¹³¹ By the mid-twentieth century, progressivism began to adopt a different emphasis as a result regarding the importance of citizen involvement in politics. Christopher Lasch, a former progressive, lamented this transformation in his work *The Revolt of the Elites*, in which he stated, "In their drive to insulate themselves against risk and contingency- against the unpredictable hazards that affect human life- the thinking classes have seceded not just from the common world around them but from reality itself."¹³²

¹³¹ This stumbling on the ability of the American public to design a political system that could function justly was a recurrent contradiction in Progressive ideas since the Great Depression and especially after the Second World War. Marc Stears highlights the beginning of this trend in the following quote: "All of their fundamental principles led them to demand a rapid and radical democratization of industry, but they also feared that the chosen agents of such democratization would be tempted to pursue their own interests at the expense of others displaying exactly the kind of narrow-mindedness that they thought blighted citizens in the polity at large." Marc Sears, *Demanding Democracy: American Radicals in Search of a New Politics*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2010) pg. 47 This led to various proposals like those of Walter Lippmann, with "the first and most frequently remembered was a call for crucial political decisions to be taken out of the hands of the intellectually limited citizen body as a whole and vested in an informed, educated and trusted elite." Marc Sears, *Demanding Democracy: American Radicals in Search of a New Politics*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2010) pg. 66 Walter Lippmann was probably the most popular elite-advocate in the Progressive Movement, but not the only one and there were also contradictory voices. Reinhold Niebuhr held similar views to that of Lippmann in stating, "All social co-operation in a large scale than the most intimate social group requires a measure of coercion. While no state can maintain its unity purely by coercion neither can it preserve itself without coercion." Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, (USA, Westminster John Knox Press, 1932) pg. 5-6 John Dewey was more in contrast to that of Lippmann and Niebuhr in holding the viewpoint that "It was useless to try to remove the temptations in the governing elite to hope that the common good could be served above, before a common good had actually been identified by the citizen body itself." Marc Sears, *Demanding Democracy: American Radicals in Search of a New Politics*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2010) pg. 91

¹³² Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy*, (London: UK, W. W. Norton & Company, 1995) pg. 20 Lasch also further emphasized that "The point can be stated more broadly: Democracy works best when men and women do things for themselves, with the help of their friends and neighbors, instead of depending on the state." Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy*, (London: UK, W. W. Norton & Company, 1995) pg. 7-8

Similar developments that paralleled the original Progressive Movement occurred in Occupy organizations that had a profound effect on how the occupations functioned and developed. While the terminology Occupy progressive is suitable for identifying the majority of Occupy activists, the occupations were not only composed solely of progressive activists and consisted of varying interpretations on how public power should be utilized. While the unity in criticizing the current socio-economic and political systems brought these differing ideologies together, they could not agree on how to rectify the situation, which resulted in the image portrayed in various media outlets of a "movement" without direction.¹³³ The friction between these differing visions over the role of government in society incited the need for some coordinating element to bring the different backgrounds together. In response to this friction, Occupy progressives began to organize an elite core to direct and guide the General Assemblies, the "legislative" body of all occupations. This emergence of an elite did indeed bring a sense of unity, but it also demonstrated a contradiction of Occupy principles as the message of "the 99%" was diametrically opposed to the notion of certain activists having a higher value and input in comparison to everyone else.

¹³³ Slavoj Zizek, a post-Marxist philosopher, highlighted the friction between progressives and post-Marxists in stating "The problem is not corruption or greed. The problem is the system, which is a very different system from the one described by the "reform slogans favored by traditional progressives." Indeed the divide between Post-Marxists and progressives, two sections of the Occupy progressive trend receiving much attention, would be the topic of reform. Post-Marxists did not want a return of communism, which Zizek stated "failed absolutely..." However, they were anti-capitalists and while they used the language of the 99% and the 1%, it was not a significant revelation for them. According to them, that was inevitable and Zizek also emphasized that "The marriage between democracy and capitalism is over." The Parallax, "Slavoj Zizek Speaks at Occupy Wall Street: Transcript," *Impose*, published on 17 September 2013, <http://www.imposemagazine.com/bytes/slavoj-zizek-at-occupy-wall-street-transcript>, viewed on 21 May 2014. Progressives, on the other hand, were not anti-capitalists and were advocating to reform certain practices for the benefit of everyone. For progressives, the language of the 99% has much more significance because it highlights a failure in a system that they support more or less, if still corrupted in their eyes. One such example of this desire for reform would be the "Restore Glass-Steagall" sign that seemed to be a favorite of progressives, and a hallmark legislation of New Deal Progressivism. Todd Gitlin, *Occupy Nation: The Roots, The Spirit, and The Promise of Occupy Wall Street*, (New York, USA: itbooks, 2012) pg. 106

Occupy progressives created an unwelcoming environment that not only pushed many activists back into a partisan position, but it also effectively ended the physical occupations. As at the end of the nineteenth century with the abuse of power by the new trusts of the age, Occupy progressives sought to re-engage all Americans concerning the abuse of power by corporate interests that led to the recession of 2008-9. Progressives, with the message of the “99%,” sought to overcome political barriers with a political agenda they believed everyone could accept. However, when there were any dissenting or contrary positions, Occupy progressives became more controlling and “elite” oriented to ensure that “the message” wasn’t lost or changed. Indeed, occupations across the country witnessed a battle between participants in the General Assembly and those who organized and administrated it. Eventually, paralysis ensued and the decision-making process, at least amongst and between the occupations as a whole, virtually collapsed. This facilitated the closure of the encampments by the city governments and the FBI in January 2012 because, in essence, the occupations had almost ended themselves.

Obscuring other ideologies

Thus we witness in both the Tea Party and Occupy rising tensions and the increased development of ideological tensions. While conservatives make up the majority of Tea Party organizations in the United States, other ideological backgrounds still make up a not unsubstantial minority. The same is true for progressives in Occupy, with other ideologies also seeking their input in the protests and organizations. While many of these other

ideological backgrounds have issues in common with the majority ideologies and align somewhat with their agendas, it does do a disservice to classify them as just subsets of conservatism or progressivism.¹³⁴ Furthermore, it misrepresents both the Tea Party and Occupy as it renders opaque other ideologies that are not in agreement that could bring a greater understanding of current events in the United States.

One such ideology is libertarianism and right-wing anarchism in the Tea Party, which does receive attention concerning its involvement but, again, largely in relation to conservatism.¹³⁵ One popular example would be Jon Stewart's impersonation of Glenn Beck stating: "So how do we get back from China? Be a conservative libertarian who follows the rules of God." Libertarianism is in fact an ideology in the United States that few seem to understand, with many largely focusing on the "no regulation" aspects of many economic proposals made by libertarians.¹³⁶ Through this spectrum, libertarians and right-wing anarchists are seen not so much as a distinct ideology, but more as an extreme conservative faction that hold even more uncompromising positions than that of their more "moderate conservative partisan brethren." This had the effect of discrediting them as unrealistic or even dangerous to American politics, in that they are perceived as destabilizing to progress.

¹³⁴ Conservatism is a rather sweeping ideological affiliation. However, the Tea Party conservatives that constituted the majority of Tea Party activists were a particular blend of religious social conservatism with historical originalism. Neo-liberals, neo-conservatives, and other "right-wing" ideologies had differences with this majority, even if collaboration was possible. Progressives had similar issues with socialists, environmentalists, and other "left-wing" ideologies.

¹³⁵ While it is satire, Jon Stewart's impression of Glenn Beck is indicative of this association, especially since many libertarians would question the categorization of Glenn Beck as a libertarian. "So how do we get back from China? Be a conservative libertarian who follows the rules of God." Demo Crat, "Jon Stewart Does Glenn Beck on Countdown MSNBC," *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dU22QEclVQo>, published on 19 March 2010, viewed 27 February 2015

¹³⁶ One example would be from Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson's book *Winner-Take-All Politics*: "Throughout, Greenspan had doggedly argued that markets knew best, and that regulators had no business second-guessing the decisions of investors and firms. Belatedly, Greenspan's historic connection to the radical libertarianism of Ayn Rand began to look less like an amusing idiosyncrasy and more like a serious liability for the principal architect of American economic policy." Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer - And Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*, (London: UK, Simon and Schuster, 2010) p. 254

Moreover, this coupling also significantly hides the many contradictions that libertarian ideology has with conservatism.

The “left-libertarians” and traditional anarchists in Occupy are already at a disadvantage when compared with how Americans regard the libertarians that are found in the Tea Party, as their influences are derived mostly from other nations.¹³⁷ Furthermore, if Americans do know something of the ideology, they normally associate it with socialism or communism, but there are strong contradictions when these ideologies are compared with each other. As a result, many clump this aspect of libertarianism, along with socialism and communism, together with progressivism as a radical incarnation because of their “anti-capitalist” message. Left-libertarians and anarchists are further considered even more dangerous than the libertarians in the Tea Party as a result of their foreign influences and history throughout the world. Any attempt to try and overcome this ignorance surrounding their ideology is arrested by the association with progressivism, which holds more contradictions with “left-libertarianism” and anarchism than either socialism or communism.

The conglomeration of differing ideologies into two divisive political camps is part of a process that homogenizes political participation and furthers polarization in the United States. Sometimes this process is intentional, as with the news reporting, which sought to create dramatic coverage. One example would be an interview between Alex Wagner from MSNBC and Dr. Ron Paul that was entitled with the question “Father of the Fringe?” that

¹³⁷ An excellent source on American anarchists and “left-libertarians” would be the book by Paul Avrich *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America*, (Chichester, UK: Princeton University Press, 1995). Throughout the book, there are many examples immigrants or activists in other countries commenting on anarchism in the United States, with the examples of Bartolomeo Vanzetti and Nicola Sacco as one well known instance.

portrayed the former congressman as extreme and out of touch with American citizens.¹³⁸

In an interview with an Occupy activist (at least he was described as such), Sean Hannity on FoxNews stated the following: "I have a handbook here called 'Anarchist Basics.' Did you ever see this? . . . In the back of this book there is a link to a website 'Bombs and shields.'"¹³⁹ These are examples of the explicit manipulation of the popular image of libertarian and anarchist activists in order to portray them as the fringes of radical organizations.

However, after the experience described at the PorcFest in 2013, the homogeneity and general identification of both the Tea Party and Occupy as conservative and progressive movements as portrayed in the media and perceived by Americans is called into question. Firstly, the presence of Tea Party and Occupy activists at the same political event simultaneously contradicts the image of both being diametrically opposed to one another. Former and current Tea Party and Occupy activists are present everywhere at this event attending the same talks and presentations simultaneously. Considering the national dialogue of each, libertarians should represent the extremes of both sides, have agendas that are incompatible, and antagonistic to one another. While there are libertarians who do argue with either Tea Party or Occupy activists, the vast majority seem to coexist with no conflict. This, in and of itself, is already quite a contradiction to the popular image of both.

¹³⁸ Alex Wagner, "Ron Paul Completely Destroys MSNBC's Alex Wagner," YouTube, published on 18 August 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCvJdmylrk0>, viewed on 4 May 2015

¹³⁹ Godless Conservative Libertarian "Occupy Wall Street Douche Bag Gets Completely Owned on Fox News," YouTube, published on 3 May 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2KP7QL-T0>, viewed 4 May 2015 It was spoken about within Occupy and by those researching the phenomenon that often people would be brought on TV to speak for Occupy who had little involvement or who were actually agent provocateurs that sought to discredit the related organizations. This activist in the interview with Sean Hannity, Harrison Schultz has been accused of being one such person. One such source is the following website: <http://newsbusters.org/blogs/mark-finkelstein/2011/10/03/occupy-wall-street-organizer-marketing-analyst-whose-linkedin-list>. It's veracity has not been confirmed and is probably false, but the statements of the activist were indeed questionable.

Secondly, occasions where libertarians of different backgrounds have been criticized by conservatives or progressives in the Tea Party and Occupy further demonstrate that libertarianism is not an extreme version of either. Congressman Dr. Ron Paul was booed at a Tea Party debate with a conservative majority in the audience for stating the following: “This idea that the whole Muslim world is responsible for this [9/11] and they are attacking us because we are free and prosperous- that is just not true.”¹⁴⁰ Noam Chomsky, present at some occupations and a libertarian socialist persona, ended up in a heated exchange with Slavoj Žižek, also present at Occupy Wall Street and friendlier with progressive ideals, in which Žižek stated, “Well, I don’t think I know a guy who was so often empirically wrong.”¹⁴¹ Both examples demonstrate a level of hostility that the majorities had towards these minority elements in their differences concerning ideology and opinions.

Finally, what was observed at PorcFest demonstrated that all libertarians represented something fundamentally different from what established politics is today. To demonstrate how different, the following quote from a left-libertarian activist in Occupy stated:

When the Tea Party was first announced in 2009, I was initially more positive . . . than I am now. Tax day protests are a good thing too. That’s one of the things I like about libertarians. They try and call attention to the way in which people are dispossessed by the state, the way in which people’s resources are put into unwanted or obstructive projects through the tax system.¹⁴²

He went on later to say this viewpoint changed when the Republicans appeared to have had made a significant connection and it was clear that the Tea Party was becoming more conservative. Despite this change, however, the activist’s initial impression was very

¹⁴⁰ Ji hoft “Ron Paul Booed at CNN- Tea Party Debate,” *YouTube*, published on 12 September 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfBKKh0C2eo>, viewed 3 May 2015

¹⁴¹ Slavoj Žižek Videos “Žižek Responds to Chomsky ‘He’s Empirically Wrong’ (2013),” *YouTube*, published on 14 October 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=guAm9eH754Q>, viewed on 3 May 2014

¹⁴² Interviewee Occupy 13, PorcFest X 2013, June 2013, Volume II, pg. 303

“unprogressive” and represented a concurrence with the Tea Party that many progressives have been unable to express. He went on to describe the overall agenda of left-libertarians, as he saw it: “We are reviving a conversation, but we are also trying to start new conversations between people who haven’t typically talked to each other in a long time.”¹⁴³

These examples demonstrate that there is something unsaid or unrealized about the Tea Party and Occupy that challenges how Americans perceive their political system and how it operates. PorcFest 2013 included many other activists with similar sentiments to that of the Occupy activist above that indicated that libertarianism had an alternate impact on these phenomena than is generally acknowledged. Indeed, it would appear that they represent something distinct and separate from conservatism and progressivism. This is radically different from what Americans would expect given the standard narrative of both the Tea Party and Occupy.

¹⁴³ Interviewee Occupy 13, PorcFest X 2013, June 2013, Volume II, pg. 303

Chapter 2

The Tea Party Libertarian Coalition

The Tea Party is commonly perceived as a conservative movement that is often associated with corporate backers seeking a reactionary agenda. However, an activist from Staten Island, who was also present at PorcFest, demonstrated that not only are new perspectives possible, but they are also quite apparent. Originally, this activist was what one would call a stereotypical conservative, with the following statement illustrating that position.

I thought George W. Bush was the greatest president ever. He was awesome. I was a Republican and a conservative, whatever that meant for me. I was a FoxNews conservative. Whatever they said, I was like, 'Right on, yeah. Get bin Laden and Al-Qaida and all that. No matter how much money you need to do it.'¹⁴⁴

However, this participant quickly learned of another ideology existing within Tea Party organizations that possessed clear distinctions from conservatism.

Then I woke up . . . I was a mainstream Tea Partier in the very beginning of the Tea Party. I was actually involved with another Tea Party, who wouldn't tolerate my shift into libertarianism. They were strict neo-conservatives and they were like, as I continued showing them the philosophies that I was discovering, they were like, 'No, I don't know where you're going.' So I ended up splitting ways and starting my own group. I started out as a mainstream Tea Partier and moved in that direction.¹⁴⁵

Given that this quote clearly provides evidence that there is more to the Tea Party than originally envisioned, libertarianism needs to be investigated, along with the subsequent affiliated Tea Party organizations.

¹⁴⁴ Interviewee Tea Party 1, Vietnam Veterans Plaza, New York City, 30 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 18

¹⁴⁵ Interviewee Tea Party 1, Vietnam Veterans Plaza, New York City, 30 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 18

Houston, Texas provides an illustration into how libertarian Tea Party activists can exist while those outside the Tea Party simultaneously perceive it as predominantly conservative. Within Houston, Texas, there are a plethora of past and current Tea Party organizations seeking to initiate change in the political system. It would seem questionable to have two separate organizations (which are different from branches), let alone more than two, for one city representing the same principles and following a similar ideology. It would however be completely rational if each represented a different set of principles and separate ideologies. In fact, while Americans tend to believe that the Tea Party is a focused movement enjoying moderate success in elections, the reality suggests a rather different narrative. It does not represent a movement as understood today, but rather as an organizing agent for those who are dissatisfied with public life and the use and/or abuse of collective power. Yet, while it may act as a beacon to those who are disenfranchised within the American political system for various reasons, the specific goals, agendas, and direction of each Tea Party organization are largely determined by those who constitute them. While each organization is independent in practice, two trends do emerge that can be visualized via the situation existing in Houston. One of these trends is represented by a unique conservative ideology that was outlined in the previous chapter, constituting the majority of the organizations and activists and generating the image so popular to Americans today.

The second trend, though, represents a different activism that departs from conservatism and, while advocating similar principles, yields different results. It is a coalition of libertarians, along with former liberals, moderates, and moderate conservatives united by libertarian principles and activists. While this libertarian coalition adheres to principles similar to that of Tea Party conservatives, they depart sharply with how they

express their principles and how they envision the future. In fact, they demonstrate a side of American culture that has been wrongly associated with radical conservatism. This is understandable because when libertarianism is mentioned, Ayn Rand or the Cato Institute emerges by association and neither dissuades the extreme conservative label.¹⁴⁶ However, when examining libertarianism beyond a superficial glance, it becomes impossible to place the ideology on the modern American political spectrum except between conservatism and liberalism. However, there is nothing moderate about libertarians, as they support positions like gay marriage, drug legalization, crusades against corporate monopolies, and other classic modern liberal positions simultaneously with the abolition of the income tax, free markets, and small or no government, which are classic conservative positions.¹⁴⁷ Ultimately, libertarianism is actually an anomaly in American politics that occupies a space that is entirely of its own.

Nevertheless, this “other” trend, or the Tea Party libertarian coalition, transforms how one perceives the Tea Party in the United States, along with how popular political action is perceived in American politics and the promise of citizen-led activism for the future. Libertarians have proven resistant to the radicalization that has been so prevalent amongst Tea Party conservatives as a direct result in how libertarians conduct their activism

¹⁴⁶ The Cato Institute is a popular think tank that is usually attributed the title of libertarianism because of its advocacy of the deregulation of the economy. However, when one of its main providers is the Koch family, skepticism should be advocated when using this label. The Koch brothers are more associated with “astroturfing” and don’t seem to adhere to an ideology per se, but are more opportunistic when it comes to politics. Ayn Rand’s works are from the early twentieth century and before libertarianism really developed as an ideology. They are a number of passages in her books that many libertarians would consider inconsistent with their philosophy today. Furthermore, her contribution was more to popular culture than to libertarianism as a philosophy. So, while it is important to mention her works in the context of libertarianism, it is important to realize that libertarians enjoy reading her books but are not necessarily used by activists to create their world view.

¹⁴⁷ Actually, the classic conservative position of small government is a bit of a misnomer. Conservatives do want smaller government in relation to progressives and other liberals. However, in relation to libertarians, the conservative concept of government is still rather large. When considering the no government demand, conservatives are strictly against this position.

and foresee the achievement of their goals. While the well-researched Tea Party conservatives appear to be reaching a dead-end concerning their activism, the Tea Party libertarian coalition demonstrates that popular activism can break boundaries within established political parties and provide a positive example for future activists. Yet, the Tea Party libertarian coalition is also finding the Tea Party association constraining, as certain libertarian ideals stretch beyond the subject of governmental power. If the Tea Party libertarian coalition is to promote and possibly achieve these other goals, many began to realize the need to break free of the limits imposed on them by the popular perception of the Tea Party banner and mature as a full and independent movement. At PorcFest in 2013, it was this breaking of those limitations that was what anyone could witness upon visiting the festival.

The Libertarian Coalition

“Libertarianism” is often mentioned as a background story to the Tea Party, with many references in popular works. Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson exerted that the bigger tent of Tea Party organization “presents some significant challenges to Tea Party cohesion. From abortion to drug laws to gay marriage, libertarians and social conservatives have almost diametrically opposed views- a fact that can lead to severe strain on Tea Party groups.”¹⁴⁸ Acknowledging that libertarians simply have a presence in the Tea Party does

¹⁴⁸ Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 36 Skocpol and Williamson only spend four pages describing this friction and continue to document conservatism in the Tea Party. To be fair, the subject of the book does relate to conservatism and not libertarianism.

not seem to be a problem, but there is no further elaboration on their involvement in the phenomenon or, more basically, who constitutes this coalition.

The demographic breakdown of the Tea Party libertarian coalition possesses a contrasting character to overall Tea Party demographics. While they are educated and mostly white, the similarities end ultimately at these points, with the most important difference being age.¹⁴⁹ Tea Party libertarians are much younger than their conservative counterparts, as was demonstrated in the Ron Paul campaign of 2012.¹⁵⁰ Libertarians are also, despite the criticism leveled at them by liberals concerning selfishness, not nearly as established economically as Tea Party conservatives and, by consequence, more invested in their activism.¹⁵¹ Tea Party libertarians are also more diverse, despite still being primarily white, because of their support for issues such as gay rights and the condemnation of police

¹⁴⁹ While both Tea Party conservatives and libertarians are educated, there is a difference in what type of education they received. Tea Party conservatives tend to have a more traditional education through the university system (B.A., M.A., etc.), while Tea Party libertarians tend to be self-educated. This is a result of their general hostility towards state education and their inability to afford private education in the United States. An example of this hostility is the www.schoolsucksproject.com. "School Sucks Project is a podcast, YouTube Channel, and on-line community dedicated to redefining education. We promote home-education, critical thinking, peaceful parenting, personal growth and nonviolent communication strategies. What education is: a lifelong process of seeking and integrating new knowledge, an intrinsically motivated journey that serves the needs of the individual learner; What education isn't: compulsory, institutionalized schooling." "Mission & Meaning," *School Sucks Project- Education Evolution*, viewed on 27 July 2015 <http://schoolsucksproject.com/about/historymission/>.

¹⁵⁰ The Ron Paul campaigns in 2008 and 2012 really showed the divide between conservatives and libertarians with regards to age, which also demonstrated a divide in the Republican Party. "Ron Paul prompted countless young people to begin discovering the works of Austrian economists Ludwig von Mises and Murray Rothbard, radical thinkers whom Beltway-based free-market institutions had mostly downplayed for years in the interest of appearing respectable to the mainstream." Yuri Maltsev and Roman Skaskiw, *The Tea Party Explained: From Crisis to Crusade*, Chicago: Open Court, 2013, Location 954 This was corroborated by FoxNews (Young voters propelling Ron Paul campaign, <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2012/01/12/young-voters-propelling-ron-pauls-campaign/>), the Huffington Post (Ron Paul's Insurgent Campaign Propelled By Young Voters, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/12/ron-paul-young-voters_n_1202616.html), and Forbes (Six Reasons Paul appeals to young voters, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stephenricher/2012/01/19/six-reasons-paul-appeals-to-some-young-voters/>)

¹⁵¹ According to a report made by the Cato Institute, 61% of libertarians have an income of USD 50,000 or less and only 21% with an income between USD 50,000 and USD 80,000. Boaz, David and David Kirby, "The Libertarian Vote," *Policy Analysis*, Policy Analysis No. 580, <http://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/libertarian-vote>, doi: 2006-10-18T00:00:00-04:00, pg. 16 While the Cato Institute may not be indicative of the libertarian movement, their research by David Boaz and David Kirby appears to be.

racial profiling.¹⁵² Furthermore, while libertarians are less likely to be as formally educated as conservatives in the Tea Party, many of these activists obtain what is commonly known as “self-education.” This has been a common method of obtaining information amongst popular activists throughout American history.¹⁵³ This has the effect of producing a different level of priorities, energy, and activism in general when compared to what other Tea Party activists generate.

This energy and set of priorities influences the ideological foundation of the Tea Party, which also provides further evidence for the presence of the libertarian coalition. Christopher S. Parker and Matt A. Barreto outline a demographic chart in their work *Change They Can't Believe In*, with interesting results. Of the “True Believers” concerning the Tea Party, 9% were liberal and 25 % were moderate; 11% were Democrats and 32% were independents.¹⁵⁴ While the make-up of non-conservatives is an overall minority that does not imply that it should be ignored as insignificant or as immaterial. Anthony DiMaggio outlines in his book *The Rise of the Tea Party* how only 60 % of support for the Tea Party comes from conservatives and 64% comes from Republicans. Conversely, 9% of liberals and 24% of moderates, along with 9% of Democrats and 40% of Independents, expressed

¹⁵² One example of the support for homosexual rights would be the LGBT Libertarian organization located in Asheville, North Carolina, which one activist interviewed had connections with. “LGBT Libertarians-Facebook,” <https://www.facebook.com/LGBTlibertarians>, 15 August 2014. An example of the campaign against racial profiling in policing cities, along with a general opposition to police brutality, would be the website “Cop Block.” *CopBlock | Reporting Police Abuse, Brutality, and Corruption*, <http://www.copblock.org/>, 15 August 2014.

¹⁵³ The Populist Movement was famous for this self-education process. The Populists devised a trans-state education program where speakers and educators would use the new railroad and industrialized printing presses to help educate Americans on a variety of issues. As pointed out earlier concerning libertarian aversion to institutionalized learning, libertarians are attempting something similar via the internet and libertarian festivals like the PorcFest. The results are various, like the Populists again. An excellent source on the Populist education program would be Charles Postel’s *The Populist Vision*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007)

¹⁵⁴ While Parker and Barreto did not question about libertarians, it can safely be assumed that many libertarians classified themselves as independents. Christopher S. Parker, and Matt A. Barreto, *Change They Can't Believe In: The Tea Party and Reactionary Politics in America*, (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2013) pg. 288-289

support for the Tea Party.¹⁵⁵ Melissa Deckman conducted a more specific analysis on Tea Party women activists and yielded the following results: 14% from Democrats, 6.0% either Independent or unsure, 20.7% moderate, and 5.1% liberal or very liberal.¹⁵⁶ These are all consistent findings in which at least one quarter of Tea Party activists qualify as something other than conservative. Given the tenacity and absolutism of the various conservative organizations in the Tea Party, it is very probable that this significant minority represents the Tea Party libertarian coalition.

The influence of the libertarian coalition within the Tea Party was not only limited to ideology, but also exists amongst issues of concern that demonstrated a contrast with the common assumptions concerning religion, the environment, and equal rights. Paul Street and Anthony DiMaggio asked whether Roe vs Wade was a bad decision and received only 53% affirmative answers from Tea Party supporters; 16% agreed that gays and lesbians should be allowed to marry; only 15% agreed that global warming didn't exist; and only 51% believed that global warming wouldn't have an impact on the environment.¹⁵⁷ Melissa Deckman also charted how Tea Party women view certain issues and the results were equally as surprising. Of those polled, 26.8% were favorable or very favorable to same-sex marriage, 73% for stronger environmental protection, and 32.7% for abortion being legal in all or most cases.¹⁵⁸ These are not opinions normally associated with conservatives in the Tea Party, but they are classic libertarian positions and provide further proof that the libertarian coalition has a significant presence, if still yet a minority.

¹⁵⁵ Anthony DiMaggio, *The Rise of The Tea Party: Political Discontent and Corporate Media in the Age of Obama*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2011), pg. 142

¹⁵⁶ Melissa Deckman, "Of Mamma Grizzlies and Politics," in *Steep*, ed. Lawrence Rosenthal and Christine Trost, (London, UK: University of California Press, 2012) pg. 178

¹⁵⁷ Paul Street and Anthony DiMaggio, *Crashing the Tea Party: Mass Media and the Campaign to Remake American Politics*, (London, UK: Paradigm Publishers, 2011) pg. 60

¹⁵⁸ Melissa Deckman, "Of Mamma Grizzlies and Politics," in *Steep*, ed. Lawrence Rosenthal and Christine Trost, (London, UK: University of California Press, 2012) pg. 181

The libertarian coalition is not a conglomeration though of libertarian, conservative and progressive ideas transformed into activism against the abuses of American governmental power. Rather, the liberals and conservatives who join the libertarian coalition undergo a conversion in political ideology similar to the conversion outlined previously from the former Tea Party conservative from Staten Island. For many, the conversion from conservative to libertarian is not difficult to imagine, given that Ron Paul, a self-professed libertarian, participated in the Republican primaries in 2008 and 2012. However, this is once again a case of the tendency to categorize libertarians as extreme conservatives. One obvious example of a liberal conversion is the presence of the Facebook page with 16,385 likes (as of 7 April 2014) entitled Progressive Libertarianism.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, the Tea Party libertarian coalition is comprised of libertarians, but with activists from different origins that have different areas of focus concerning their activism who maintain their former identity title as a sense of differentiation.

Amongst this variety of Tea Party libertarians, there is a de-facto organization based upon their willingness to tolerate the limited presence of state structures. Classical libertarians, or minarchists, agree in their necessity, but adhere to the principle that the best government is the one that governs least. An example of classical libertarians would be Friedrich A. Hayek, with the *Road to Serfdom* and *The Constitution of Liberty*.¹⁶⁰ In general, when Americans think of libertarians as a distinct political group Hayek and those like him

¹⁵⁹ Progressive libertarianism, while not a common phenomenon in the Tea Party, is a product of coalitions like the Tea Party libertarian coalition. Democrats who join the Tea Party libertarians and remain with these activists largely develop similar ideologies. For more information on Progressive Libertarianism, the Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/ProgressiveLibertarianism>.

¹⁶⁰ F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, (London, UK: Routledge Classics, 2001) pg. 79 In addition to these early writers in the twentieth century, current commentators on libertarianism are Charles Murray with *What it Means to be a Libertarian: A Personal Interpretation*, (New York, USA: Broadway Books, 1997) , Jason Brennan with *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) and David Boaz with *Libertarianism: A Primer*, (New York, USA: The Free Press, 1997).

define that organization. They are generally unconcerned about corporate power, but they do advocate free and unfettered markets from government intervention.

Over the past decades though, a new type of libertarianism has developed called either libertarian anarchism or anarcho-capitalism, which promotes the abolition of the state entirely. While this is a relatively new development, it has its roots in the works of Robert Nozick, with *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, and Murray Rothbard, with *The Ethics of Liberty*.¹⁶¹ These libertarians hold that civil society is where the people govern themselves and that state structures create an imbalance of power that will ultimately be misused.¹⁶² Furthermore, libertarian anarchists see war as a by-product of this system and believe the only way to secure peace is through the abolition of the state.¹⁶³ While these two categories define the two poles of libertarian thought today, most libertarian activists oscillate between both poles.

¹⁶¹ Murray Rothbard's most notable work is *Ethics of Liberty*, (London, UK: New York University Press, 1998). Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1974) Gerard Casey in his book *Libertarian Anarchy* summarizes the theories of Nozick and Rothbard with the following two quotes: "Anarchy is the position in which the members of a society naturally find themselves when they are not subject to the power of a state. The theory that argues for the desirability of such a condition is anarchism." George Casey, *Libertarian Anarchy: Against the State*, (London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2012) pg. 5 "Not only is the state not equivalent to society, it is not, properly, even part of society unless we are prepared to recognize criminal gangs as part of society as well." pg. 34 Other current commentators on libertarian anarchism are Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr. with *Against the State: An Anarcho-Capitalist Manifesto*, (Auburn, AL, USA: LewRockwell.com, 2014) and J. Michel Oliver with *The New Libertarianism: Anarcho-Capitalism*, (UK: Amazon.co.uk, 2013)

¹⁶² Indeed, many accuse libertarians of being overly optimistic of human nature, but libertarians are actually quite realistic when considering human behavior. The whole premise concerning the reduction in state structures is because they believe people are not perfect and power has a corrupting influence. Gerard Casey states, "Libertarianism is often criticized for having a naively optimistic view of human nature. In fact, if anything, it is the modern liberal who has a utopian conception of human perfectibility while the modern conservative inclines towards a quasi-Calvinistic concept of our inherent and radical sinfulness." George Casey, *Libertarian Anarchy: Against the State*, (London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2012) pg. 56

¹⁶³ An example of this opinion is given by Gerard Casey, who expresses that "Not all human violence has its origin in the state but wars, the most extreme and extensive form of inter-human violence, are fought either between states or within states as one group or another attempts to seize hold of the reins of state power. The existence of states only facilitates some of those few people with antisocial desires who want to dominate others." George Casey, *Libertarian Anarchy: Against the State*, (London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2012) pg. 74

The difference between minarchists and anarchists has led to friction within the Tea Party libertarian coalition, as well as inside individual libertarian circles in general. Anarchists tend to take the opinion that “minarchism is a very dangerous philosophy” and they often cite the American Revolution as a minarchist experiment, stating that there has been “no better laboratory experiment for the success or failure of minarchism than the creation of the American republic.”¹⁶⁴ As most libertarians are overwhelmingly negative about the state of American politics, society, and governance, this is an assertive condemnation of minarchism. Minarchists, conversely argue that anarchism is irrational and that “a society with no monopoly on major force will degenerate into gang warfare. There will always be some human beings who use predation in order to survive.”¹⁶⁵ Despite these differing viewpoints, individual libertarians are able to circumvent these divisions by focusing on the fact that both agree that the structure of governance today is immoral. There are many who even want to move past the debate, with one libertarian stating, “I intend to show . . . that the distinction is fundamentally meaningless and the whole debacle nothing more than an enormous waste of time.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Inibo’s Channel, “A Stefbot Bit: Minarchy vs Anarchy,” *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FuZWbHPNe2E>, published on 24 September 2012, viewed on 25 May 2015. These comments came from a very controversial anarcho-capitalist activist named Stefan Molyneux, but they are representative of other anarcho-capitalists as well. It is note-worthy to expand somewhat on why Molyneux is considered so controversial. He has created a web-radio show called Freedomain Radio, which publishes on YouTube and has a very large audience. The show tackles issues like parenting, interpersonal relations, and philosophy in general and Molyneux makes pseudo-diagnoses for his callers that mimic those of psychologists. This is obviously controversial because he is not a trained psychologist. However, his wife is a psychologist, but this has led both into further trouble concerning violation of ethical practices. Furthermore, there have been charges against Molyneux of actually creating a cult on his radio show and, with the style and rhetoric he utilizes when addressing his audience, it can be interpreted that way. He has been present at the PorcFest and is popular within some libertarian circles, but not all. His involvement with the Tea Party though was extremely minimal.

¹⁶⁵ Stefan Molyneux, “Anarchism Versus Minarchism – Stefan Molyneux & Jan Helfeld,” *YouTube*, published on 2 September 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gK2xB9F9Ag>, viewed on 25 May 2015.

¹⁶⁶ Shane Killian “Minarchism vs Anarcho-capitalism,” *YouTube*, published on 29 October 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-q5V7aCVWow>, viewed on 25 May 2015.

What assists libertarians in at least ignoring and at times overcoming this divide within the individual focus strand is the relative harmony concerning how an economy should be organized. The vast majority of individual libertarians are in favor of the free market, which means that they adhere to similar economic theories. One popular economic theorist is Ludwig Von Mises, with an institute based around his theories in Auburn, Alabama.¹⁶⁷ He represented what is now known as the Austrian economic model and stands in stark contrast to that of Keynesian economics. Other economists who are associated with these theories would be F. A. Hayek and Henry Hazlitt. Austrian economics is hostile to the idea of a federal reserve, deeply concerned about the value of money, and holds that any interference in the free market will have negative effects.

Citing prominent activists within the Tea Party libertarian coalition is rather difficult, as constituents take pride in the de-centralized and grassroots nature of the organization. A libertarian activist from the Houston Tea Party, in response to the question how important grassroots organizations are, stated, “Vital. As citizens, we have avoided our duty to be involved in politics for far too long. This avoidance is why we are where we are today.”¹⁶⁸ Therefore, for members of the Tea Party libertarian coalition, all participants are to assume

¹⁶⁷ “The Mises Institute, founded in 1982, is an educational institution devoted to advancing Austrian economics, freedom, and peace in the classical-liberal tradition. For over 30 years the Mises Institute has provided both scholars and laymen with resources to broaden their understanding of the economic school of thought known as Austrian economics. This school is most closely associated with our namesake, economist Ludwig von Mises. We are the worldwide epicenter of the Austrian movement. Through their research in the fields of economics, history, philosophy, and political theory, Mises’ students F.A. Hayek, Henry Hazlitt, Murray Rothbard, and others carried the Austrian school into the late twentieth century. Today, Mises Institute scholars and researchers continue the important work of the Austrian school. Austrian economics is a method of economic analysis, and is non-ideological. Nonetheless, the Austrian school has long been associated with libertarian and classical-liberal thought- promoting private property and freedom, while opposing war and aggression of all kinds.” Mises formative work in regards to the Austrian school would be *Human Action*. “What is the Mises Institute?” *Mises Institute: Austrian Economics, Freedom, and Peace*, viewed on 27 July 2015, <https://mises.org/about-mises/what-is-the-mises-Institute>, doi: (2014-06-18T11:54-05:00)

¹⁶⁸ Interviewee Tea Party 4, Houston, Texas via Facebook, 1 February 2013, Volume II, pg. 49

an active role in their activism and not permit the assumption of an identity by a few individuals on behalf of the coalition.

However, this does not assume that there are no individuals enjoying popular support amongst the Tea Party libertarian coalition or other like-minded libertarians outside the coalition, with former Congressman Dr. Ron Paul being one example. He is a prominent example of the minarchist position in libertarian thought or classical American libertarianism, in that he did have a vision for a minimal amount of government that would be outlined in constitutional law. Ron Paul enjoyed an enormous amount of popularity amongst libertarians and Tea Party members of all backgrounds while in Congress and as a presidential candidate in 2008 and 2012. Ron Paul, as a classic American libertarian, is more supportive of the Constitution than other libertarians and his rhetoric during elections actually sounds slightly conservative. However, there is one quote that demonstrates his position on the Constitution concisely:

The Constitution was never a perfect document. It had short comings from the very beginning. It recognized the institution of slavery and various other things. But the founders were wise enough to allow the Constitution to be changed. So for those who say that 'Ron Paul is overly rigid with the Constitution-' no, I am about where the founders were with the Constitution. I am not overly rigid. I think the Constitution is good. We ought to follow it, change it when we want to, but the rule of law is important. ¹⁶⁹

He also demonstrated how libertarians have specific focuses, providing a more conservative tendency in his rhetoric that explained his closer association with the Republican Party.

A popular example of the more anarchist influenced constituents within the Tea Party libertarian coalition would be the activist and radio show host Adam Kokesh. He represents what other Americans would consider to be controversial when considering libertarian philosophy, but it should not detract from his popularity amongst libertarians in

¹⁶⁹ AK47FULLAUTO, "Ron Paul and the Constitution," *YouTube*, published on 20 May 2007, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHE_0bCSIVM, viewed on 15 August 2014

the Tea Party. He is a fervent activist that adheres to anarcho-capitalist theory combined with a unique form of civil disobedience, which is rather uncharacteristic of Tea Party conservatives. One example would be the “Dance Party” held at the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C. in protest of the law outlawing dancing at the monument. However, it also highlighted the aggressive nature of arrest in the United States, as Kokesch was slammed to the ground by the security guard and placed in a choke hold. This approach has also attracted significant attention from critics against Kokesch and problems with the legal system, but this has not diminished his popularity amongst Tea Party libertarians¹⁷⁰ One activist from Oregon stated, “He says a lot of stuff that no one else is saying out there,” which is in connection to his criticisms of how society functions and the position that nothing is beyond reproach. He has also been imprisoned for his activism as well, more specifically for loading openly a gun in a part of Washington, D.C. that was actually an illegal act.

Tea Party Libertarian Principles

Libertarianism, as a philosophy, coalesced in the twentieth century and, as such, generally prioritizes topics that are still common concerns in modern politics. However, this philosophy does draw inspiration from various political and economic thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who extended their influence well into the nineteenth century.¹⁷¹ The Tea Party libertarian coalition therefore is a twenty first century

¹⁷⁰. Sarah Kaufman, “Dancing In Jefferson Memorial? Our Founding Father would approve,” *Washington Post*, published on 31 May 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/dancing-in-jefferson-memorial-our-founding-father-would-approve/2011/05/31/AGkcvkFH_story.html, viewed on 15 August 2014

¹⁷¹ This liberal tradition that laid the foundation for libertarianism starts with John Locke and his *Two Treatises of Government*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), outlining principles of property rights and

evolution of this tradition, providing a rather unique element to libertarian activism in that the primary audience largely involves other Americans alien to the philosophy. As a result, the Tea Party acted as a propaganda tool for libertarians to spread their philosophy and recruit new activists to accomplish similar goals.

Tea Party libertarians began this reach out approach earlier than the generally accepted start date for the “Tea Party conservative” brand that began with Rick Santelli’s rant shortly after the election of President Barak Obama.¹⁷² Ronald Formisano highlights how, “On December 16, 2007, libertarian congressman Ron Paul, trying to raise money for his campaign for the Republican presidential nomination, had held a symbolic tea party in Boston-collecting more than \$6 million, the largest single sum any candidate had raised, to that point, in one day.”¹⁷³ Yuri Maltsev and Roman Skaskiw highlighted further how, “The

limited government. This foundation was continued by Adam Smith and *The Wealth of Nations I-V*, (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1999), which furthered the notion of property rights and the capability of society to manage and correct itself. Thomas Paine, with works like *Common Sense* and the *Rights of Man*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), and Thomas Jefferson, with his political writings like the “Declaration of Independence,” anchored this tradition to the development of American society. However, in the nineteenth century, there were strong examples of how this proto-libertarian spirit continued to develop into what we recognize as libertarianism today. Ralph Waldo Emerson, with his essay “Politics,” *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, (New York, USA: Modern Library, 2000, pgs 378-390), Walt Whitman, with *Leaves of Grass*, (New York, USA: Dover Publications, 2007), and Henry David Thoreau, with *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience: Resistance to Civil Government*, (Chicago, USA: Charles H. Kerr, 1989), demonstrate the classic American libertarian tradition. Josiah Warren, with his periodical “The Peaceful Revolutionist,” Stephen Pearl Andrews, with works like *The Sovereignty of the Individual*, (Boston, USA: B.R. Tucker, 1889), Lysander Spooner, with publications like *No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority* (Boston, USA: Published by the Author, 1870, Kindle Version),² and Benjamin Tucker, with works like *Instead of a Book, by a Man Too Busy to Write One*, (New York, USA: Elibron and Elibron Classics, 2005), represent early starters of the libertarian anarchist tradition. Peter Marshall outlines this tradition quite well in his volume *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, (London, UK: Harper Perennial, 2008).

¹⁷² The origin of the Tea Party is a contested matter. What is important is that the popular image known today as “The Tea Party” has been agreed upon by many to have started in 2009 as stated in Chapter 1. An often cited starting point is the infamous “Santelli Rant.” Rick Santelli’s (financial analyst on CNBC) rant has been highlighted as a rallying call for conservatives to take action. One potent quote was “This is America! How many of you people want to pay for your neighbors mortgage that has an extra bathroom and can’t pay their bills?! Raise their hand!” While Santelli was commenting on the futility in assisting sub-prime mortgage holders to keep their homes, his comments were universal concerning the events of the financial crisis. The SmokingArgus, “Rick Santelli calls for Tea party on the floor of Chicago Board of Trade,” *YouTube*, published on 19 February 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcvSjKCU_Zo, 05 April 2013

¹⁷³ Ronald Formisano, *The Tea Party*, (Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press, 2012) p. 27 Scott Rasmussen and Douglas Schoen also cite this event in stating, “In 2007, . . . , Paul and his compatriots ‘re-

Ron Paul presidential campaign of 2008 produced the first modern Tea Party event, and many Ron Paul supporters later became prominent in the Tea Party.”¹⁷⁴ Indeed, it would seem that it was the libertarian coalition that established the core principles popularly associated with the Tea Party and conservatives subsequently adopted them for their own activism. For libertarians, the core principles are described as follows: the reduction or abolition of the state, “freed markets,” and natural property rights. While similar, there is a notable difference in tone and intent to the later revised principles commonly associated with Tea Party conservatives: constitutionalism, free markets, and fiscal responsibility.

The first position of the Tea Party libertarian coalition to significantly reduce or abolish state structures is puzzling to Americans because many associate chaos and injustice with the absence of the state. However, the Tea Party libertarian coalition advocated the reconsideration of all the structures of the state not only to reduce the deficit and to liberate Americans from the amount of public debt that is being taken on, but also on a principle that the institution of the state is fundamentally immoral.¹⁷⁵ They questioned the

enacted the dumping of tea in Boston Harbor, by tossing banners that read “tyranny” and “no taxation without representation” into boxes that were placed in front of an image of the harbor.” Scott Rasmussen and Douglas Schoen, *Mad as Hell: How The Tea Party Movement is Fundamentally Remaking Our Two-Party System*, (New York, USA: Broadside Books, 2010) pg. 116. This actually is a subject of contention between conservatives and libertarians in who actually represents the true spirit of Tea Party symbolism. To further the controversy over the origin of the Tea Party, Yuri Maltsev and Roman Skaskiw explained how Ron Paul was actually not at the event, but Rand Paul was the one who attended the Boston event. Yuri Maltsev and Roman Skaskiw, *The Tea Party Explained: From Crisis to Crusade*, Chicago: Open Court, 2013 Location 687 (Kindle Version). While the details of the event are still in dispute, there seems to be a general consensus that it was a libertarian event adopting the rhetoric of the “Tea Party” long before the rant of Rick Santelli.

¹⁷⁴ Maltsev, Yuri and Roman Skaskiw, *The Tea Party Explained: From Crisis to Crusade*, (Chicago: Open Court, 2013, Location 611 Kindle version)

¹⁷⁵ As non-converted libertarians constitute the largest part of the coalition within the Tea Party libertarian coalition, all state institutions are indeed up for question. However, since there are moderates, liberals, and conservatives within this coalition, some institutions receive greater attention than others. Liberals are more concerned about military and security spending while conservatives focus more attention on domestic spending, like Medicaid and Medicare. Moderates generally have no preference but understand that cuts need to be made across the board. These three subgroups within in the Tea Party libertarian coalition act like a check on libertarian advocacy so that libertarians remain in “conversation” with the general public at least to some extent. Otherwise, the anarcho-capitalist section would probably alienate the large majority of Americans.

validity of social contract theory, in that, in the opinion of libertarians, individuals are automatically linked to a contract agreed upon over two hundred years ago (i.e. the Constitution) without requesting, no less requiring their consent. Indeed, for many libertarians, the Constitution is seen as a first step and not an end in the quest for a free and independent society. As the Tea Party libertarian from Staten Island pointed out,

There is plenty of tyranny in the Constitution. I mean, the Bill of Rights is great- it's a great start and it's based on thousands of years of libertarian or liberty philosophy. But the Bill of Rights can be suspended because the President feels like it, because there is an emergency, or whatever it is. And I am talking even then. John Adams had people thrown in jail for criticizing him.¹⁷⁶

They see government coercion or the “threat of physical violence” to enforce their obedience (e.g. paying taxes) to this social contract as immoral.¹⁷⁷ What is implied by the threat of physical violence is imprisonment of those who believe in similar ways to these libertarian activists, as expressed by the Tea Party activist in Oregon:

The stimulus: The first, the second stimulus packages were bailing out banks, businesses. I am forced to give money to the government, if I don't I go to jail. Taxes, constitutional or not is beside the point. If you don't pay them, you go to jail. I don't agree with the way the government spends the money that we give them. In my opinion, that's taxation without representation. I think that will be a big reason why people are joining.¹⁷⁸

As mentioned before, there is a variation on how much certain libertarians will accept with regards to state authority. The libertarian coalition, in general, therefore sought to at least reach a consensus on what the maximum is needed concerning state structures to ensure the protection of civil society.

¹⁷⁶ Interviewee 1 Tea Party, Vietnam Veterans Plaza, New York City, 30 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 8-9

¹⁷⁷ Adam Kokesh stated in a video on YouTube, “Now, theoretically since governments are supposed to derive their powers from the consent of the governed, that is just powers, if you do not consent to the government claiming power of you and your property, you should just be able to opt out of this government and choose to either be part of a different government or no government at all.” AdamKokesh, “The Greatest Conspiracy,” *YouTube*, published on 26 September 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFKtgrchgMQ>, viewed on 17 October 2012, Volume II, pg. 8

¹⁷⁸ Interviewee Tea Party 3, Oregon, USA, via Skype, 26 October 2012, Volume II, pg. 33

Consequently, the libertarian position contains fundamental misalignments with the conservative position that are irreconcilable when considering the possibility of a united Tea Party movement. This irreconcilability arises through the diminution in the importance or outright rejection of the Constitution by libertarians and the belief in a fundamental separation between the state and civil society. For libertarians, a constitution guarantees nothing and is superfluous in the protection of what they consider to be “natural” rights. In actuality, many libertarians, who ironically are in agreement with some liberals, consider the framing of the Constitution as an attempt by many “founding fathers” to restrict the freedoms of Americans and implement a level of control. Indeed, for many in the Tea Party libertarian coalition, the authority of the Constitution actually places the concept of natural rights in danger, as codifying them into civil law could threaten their continuation. The activist from Staten Island stated:

“Civil rights” is a kind of water downed term, to make people believe that those rights come from government, which means that they can be revoked. It’s social engineering. Using terms like civil rights is social engineering. So, human rights are sacrosanct- self-ownership, I own myself, I own my body, and I own my time and labor, and anything that I trade for those things.¹⁷⁹

For libertarians, the Constitution is unnecessary to empower individuals who are already endowed by nature those rights that the Bill of Rights and other constitutional amendments attempt to establish. While they largely acknowledge that the Constitution is an important progression in the realization of these natural rights, they do not view it as an end in itself in sharp contrast to the conservative wing of the Tea Party and of political culture in general.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Interviewee Tea Party 1, Vietnam Veterans Plaza, New York City, 30 August 2012 Volume II, pg. 12

¹⁸⁰ As demonstrated earlier with Ron Paul, libertarians in general have varying views on the Constitution. Classic libertarians are more supportive of it as a means to an end. The libertarian anarchists are more skeptical to the usefulness to the Constitution- some are hostile to it.

Tea Party libertarians also make a clear distinction between the state, or institutions that possess the monopoly on the use of aggressive violence, and civil society, the composition of individuals that form a community and the fabric in which they interact. For libertarians, civil society is constructed through a bottom-up organization and not through the top-down structure of the state. A libertarian activist in the Cedar Rapids [Iowa] Tea Party stated:

The idea is human liberty and we are only beginning to discover the value of the creative energy unleashed by humans given a proper environment. As our understanding grows we continue to reevaluate old assumptions built upon the necessity of authority and continue to see the flaws that persistently create recurring problems for society, and we push to educate and inform people that loosening controls is nothing to be feared, but is the only way forward.¹⁸¹

These activists believe that not only is progress more attainable without the state, but that the various institutions of the state are now impeding on progress in civil society.¹⁸² According to these activists, governance is a grassroots-centered idea that involves voluntary association and involvement amongst individuals that provides flexibility in decision making and greater oversight to the population, with better results.

One specific example of the Tea Party libertarian coalition's hostility to the state is the opposition to the fourteenth amendment, which seems for many non-libertarian Americans as rather bizarre and possibly racially motivated. However, there is a coherent argument behind their opposition, if not universally supported by Americans today. Corresponding to the position against social contract theory, libertarians hold that the fourteenth amendment forces individual consent to the American social contract, thereby

¹⁸¹ Interviewee Tea Party 6, via Facebook, 1 February 2013, Volume II, pg. 12

¹⁸² Jason Brennan highlights this ideal in the statement "Libertarians advocate radical authority. No people or group of people has any special authority over others. No one rules by right." Jason Brennan, *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) pg. 3 Congruent to this, Brennan also outlines how "Libertarians advocate radical freedom. Each person may decide how her life will go. We need not justify ourselves to others." pg. 4

making Americans subject to the laws created by state structures. As an explained activist on YouTube:

Basically, the fourteenth amendment was how they transfer involuntary slavery to voluntary slavery . . . by virtue of individuals giving up their god given sovereign rights . . . I do truly believe myself.¹⁸³

The Tea Party libertarian coalition believes that the fourteenth amendment violates the principles of true voluntary consent and independent sovereign citizenship. The following comment from another activist on YouTube highlights this position:

The fourteenth amendment created a new class of citizenship in the United States- a second class citizenship. Up until 1868, every American was a paramount citizen of their state and, by virtue of that, a citizen of the United States with full individual sovereignty guaranteed by amendments nine and ten in the Bill of Rights. But so-called naturalized citizens, or fourteenth amendment citizens, are paramountly subject to all laws of the United States, and, having no status as free born citizens, have no access at all the enumerated rights retained for the people in articles [amendments] nine and ten in the Bill of Rights.”¹⁸⁴

While libertarians do possess other arguments against the American government, the campaign against the fourteenth amendment is uniquely a libertarian one.

The second principle of the Tea Party libertarian coalition was the advocacy of “freed” markets, which is also rather alien to those unfamiliar with libertarian activism. Indeed, one would question how to define the difference between the conservative and libertarian positions. In fact, the libertarian position was adopted in direct contrast to the general conservative one advocated over the past few decades to emphasize the fundamental difference between the two positions.¹⁸⁵ By consequence of their rejection of

¹⁸³ Maurice Floyd, “The 14th Amendment FRAUD!!!!” *YouTube*, published on 15 March 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJ5JbM-Tyk>, viewed on 11 August 2014 This does not preclude the suspicion of some that racism is a motivation as well. While in principle libertarians do not think of people or themselves in collectives, this does not mean that all libertarian follow this principle. At PorcFest, there was a discussion about “Social Darwinism,” which one activist came out in support of and this ideology does have an element of racism to it.

¹⁸⁴ Woodrow Voluntarist “14th Amendment Truth: YOU ARE REALLY A SLAVE,” *YouTube*, published on 20 February 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvD-rOn2Zm0>, viewed on 11 August 2014

¹⁸⁵ This is a quote from the Tea Party Patriots website, which highlights an emphasis on lower taxes and the ability to become an entrepreneur. “We support policies that allow you to keep more of your own money to

state structures, the Tea Party libertarian coalition adheres to the concept of a free and unfettered market that enables individuals to pursue their interests while respecting the natural rights of other individuals. For libertarians, “a freed market also encompasses alternative arrangements- including many that already have nothing to do with employer-employee relationships or corporate management, and, which fit awkwardly, at best, with any conventional meaning of the term ‘capitalism.’”¹⁸⁶

The Tea Party libertarian coalition position contrasts with the Tea Party conservative position in a similar way to the previous position on governance. Entrepreneurship and independent business do not represent ends in themselves, but a progression towards a market free of dominance, control, or monopolies. The Tea Party libertarian coalition also supports the absolute freedom of movement, as they envision everyone benefitting from interacting with other cultures and backgrounds. The Tea Party activist from State Island voiced strong opinions on immigration in stating, “See, I am less concerned with citizenship status than why are you here. If you are here to take part in the American dream, then why shouldn’t you have the vote? If you are living and working here? You may not be “a legal citizen,” but many of those laws are racist and class driven in and of themselves”¹⁸⁷ While they oppose the mandatory enlistment within unionized labor organizations in order to gain employment, they nevertheless defend the right of workers to voluntarily cooperate to garner better working conditions and to enhance their negotiating positions.¹⁸⁸ They may

do with as you see fit and policies that will provide for and enable opportunities to find good jobs or create and grow businesses.” “Economic Freedom,” *Tea Party Patriots*, <http://www.teapartypatriots.org/ourvision/economic-freedom/>, viewed on 15 August 2014

¹⁸⁶ Gary Chartier, and Charles W. Johnson, *Markets Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, (London, UK: Minor Compositions) pg. 62

¹⁸⁷ Interviewee Tea Party 1, Vietnam Veterans Plaza, NY, 30 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 8

¹⁸⁸ This is a surprising position, but it is in fact quite common amongst libertarians. “If employees of a given firm or industry wish to organize and attempt to bargain collectively with their employers, that is their choice. Stated differently, the problem is not unions but the government policies that alter the bargaining power

oppose Obamacare because they believe that regulations will eventually drive up medical costs, but they also oppose the practices of health insurance companies that elevate prices on generic drugs and that lead to the hoarding of government-issued copyrights and patents.¹⁸⁹

A solid example of how the United States economy is not a “freed” market according to the Tea Party libertarian coalition is the farm subsidy program. As Tea Party libertarians are fundamentally against any state involvement in the management of the economy, it should not be surprising that they are against farm subsidies. Their reasoning though provides real insight as to why they believe government involvement in the economy is wrong. Firstly, Tea Party libertarians believe that farmers become dependent on aid from the state, making them vulnerable to manipulation to choose crops designated for funding, which could stifle agricultural innovation. ReasonTV, a libertarian outlet, interviewed a farmer who expressed that very sentiment in the following comment: “To be in any one of the major commodity crops, the subsidy system is really a major part of your income.”¹⁹⁰ Secondly, Tea Party libertarians believe government intervention lowers the quality of life of the less advantaged. One example of this sentiment is the quote from John Stossel, a libertarian anchorman on ABC, in which he stated, “Farm subsidies rarely go to poor people. The average farmer makes twice what the average American earns, yet Nebraska politicians

between employers and unions.” Jeffrey A. Miron, *Libertarianism: From A to Z*, (New York: Basic Books, 2011) pg. 181

¹⁸⁹ John Brennan comments on the practice that results in this situation by outlining how “‘Rent seeking’ refers to nonvoting, noncriminal activities that individuals or firms engage in with the purpose of either changing the laws or regulations or changing how the laws and regulations are administered, for the purpose of securing a benefit.” Jason Brennan, *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) pg. 121

¹⁹⁰ ReasonTV, “Agricultural Subsidies: Corporate Welfare for Farmers- YouTube,” *YouTube*, published on 27 January 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeAYuLB8VTg>, viewed on 12 August 2014

want more. ¹⁹¹ He furthered cited a government study done on farm subsidies that found that the desired effect of subsidies failed to be realized. “A government study found that the more farm aid a county got, the more likely it was to lose population. Why would that be? Because subsidies make it harder for small farmers to compete.”¹⁹² These two arguments frame the position in a tangible way for non-libertarians to understand why the Tea Party libertarian coalition is so hostile to any external management of the economy.

Tea Party libertarians hold the belief in natural property rights as a third and final principle, which are often mentioned in association with the criticisms of the state and support of the market. Property rights seem at first a rather divergent principle for Tea Party libertarians, but it actually represents the core of their philosophy in from which everything else is derived. In fact, this principle is defined through three categorizations of property that endow it with greater meaning than what has become expected by other Americans who view property rights as only the ability to own objects.¹⁹³ The first definition on property ownership is the right to self-ownership, which establishes that an individual can only own themselves and no other individual.¹⁹⁴ The second definition, which is derived from the self-ownership principle, is the right to own your own labor and capabilities. While the sub-principle of self-ownership is inviolable, individuals are able to transfer ownership of their services and labor in exchange for what they believe to be adequate compensation.

¹⁹¹StosselClassroom, “Farm Subsidies - - Stossel in the Classroom,” *YouTube*, published on 26 January 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8G1HIIIRppo>, 12 August 2014

¹⁹² StosselClassroom, “Farm Subsidies - - Stossel in the Classroom,” *YouTube*, published on 26 January 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8G1HIIIRppo>, 12 August 2014

¹⁹³ Charles Murray outlines why property rights are so important for libertarians. “The next aspect of freedom is property rights. Perhaps a better way to put it is that no form of behavioral freedom can exist without the foundation of property rights.” George Casey, *Libertarian Anarchy: Against the State*, (London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2012) pg. 27

¹⁹⁴ Indeed, Tea Party libertarians advocate that it is truly impossible to transfer ownership of one’s being to another, making slavery truly immoral. While services and labor can be transferred to others, an individual’s self-being will also be his own responsibility.

The third definition is the right to own the products and results of your labor and services, with the subsequent logic that was applied to labor and services being applied as well to the results. As one activist stated: “Using terms like civil rights is social engineering. So, human rights are sacrosanct- self-ownership, I own myself, I own my body, and I own my time and labor, and anything that I trade for those things. So, if I trade my time and labor for a home, a piece of property, that property belongs to me. I have the right to protect myself, my family, and my property. That’s sacrosanct. I have the right to defend against any violations of that.”¹⁹⁵ While this may seem self-evident, this collection of ownership principles actually establishes a philosophical justification for property ownership, disavowal of slavery, and a basis for free trade without any legislation being passed or through a social contract like the Constitution.

Subsequently, the Tea Party conservative principle of fiscal responsibility only briefly addresses the libertarian subject of property rights, highlighting another fundamental difference between the two trends adopting the Tea Party association. Jason Brennan displays this connection in stating, “Libertarians say that if you want to encourage people to conserve resources, you should give them the resources as property.”¹⁹⁶ However, this coincides as well to how libertarians view the role of individuals in civil society and their responsibility to care for it. When asked whether citizens should be responsible for civil society, a Tea Party libertarian from Cedar Rapids, Iowa stated the following:

I don’t simply believe we should be, but that we are responsible for our civil society, our economy, and most clearly our individual lives. As it is the action of individuals that shape the

¹⁹⁵ These definitions were outlined by the Staten Island Tea Party activist who came to PorcFest, but these definitions can also be found in many libertarian commentaries. On such work is Jason Brennan’s *Libertarianism*. Interviewee Tea Party 1, Vietnam Veterans Plaza, New York City, 30 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 10

¹⁹⁶ Jason Brennan, *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) pg. 157

appearance of civil society and the economy, and it is clear that individuals also bear the consequences of these appearances it is equivocally clear that such fall under our responsibilities.¹⁹⁷

While conservatives advocate citizen involvement in the decision making process through actions involving the audit of legislative decision-making, they do not embrace the full ownership over the management of society.

Intellectual property rights present an interesting example to demonstrate the notion of libertarian property rights, as libertarians generally see them as opposed to their notion of property rights. While initially they were widely supported amongst many libertarians in the early twentieth century, intellectual property is largely questioned today, especially in the anarchist motivated organizations of the Tea Party libertarian coalition.¹⁹⁸

This position was articulated by Roderick Long in stating,

To enforce copyright laws and the like is to prevent people from making peaceful use of the information they possess. If you have acquired the information legitimately (say, by buying a book), then on what grounds can you be prevented from using it, reproducing it, trading it? Is this not a violation of the freedom of speech and press?

Intellectual property rights do not represent something tangible for individuals to possess and, while they could be limited to establishing credit to the designer or creator, libertarians posit that they should not prevent the further use of “protected” notions by others.¹⁹⁹

Furthermore, they view intellectual property rights as a barrier to innovation, in that

¹⁹⁷ Interviewee Tea Party 7, via Facebook, 1 February 2012 Volume II, pg. 60

¹⁹⁸ Roderick T. Long, a senior fellow at the Mises Institute, stated in the article “The Libertarian Case Against Intellectual Property Rights” the following, “The status of intellectual property rights . . . is an issue that has long divided libertarians. Such libertarian luminaires as Herbert Spencer, Lysander Spooner, and Ayn Rand have been strong supporters of intellectual property rights. Thomas Jefferson, on the hand, was ambivalent on the issue, while radical libertarians like Benjamin Tucker in the last century and Tom Palmer in the present one have rejected intellectual property rights altogether.” Roderick T. Long, “The Libertarian Case Against Intellectual Property Rights,” in *Markets Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, ed. Gary Chartier & Charles W. Johnson, (London, UK: Minor Compositions) pgs 187-88

¹⁹⁹ Roderick T. Long, “The Libertarian Case Against Intellectual Property Rights,” in *Markets Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, ed. Gary Chartier & Charles W. Johnson, (London, UK: Minor Compositions) pg. 191

individuals no longer possess ownership of the services or products they provide. Long highlighted these failures in stating:

They [companies] went for the patented commodity as the less risky option (especially in light of the fact that they had to compete with other companies likewise holding monopolies). So the existence of patent laws, like any other form of protectionist legislation, gave the patented commodity an unfair competitive advantage against its unpatented rival.²⁰⁰

Tea Party libertarians view property rights as a way of shattering monopolistic practices and inject a sense of responsibility into actions taken, regarding that property, which contrasts, in their opinion, to how intellectual property rights operate today.

Conversely, what is noticeably missing from Tea Party libertarian activism is the fundamentalism concerning American history and a need for conformity that is so prevalent amongst radicalized Tea Party conservatives. One important reason for this distinction is that Tea Party libertarians are individualistic and resist any attempt to create a collective identity, which would require a sense of conformity. While conservatives claim to celebrate the individual, they also promote identities like “Christian,” “patriot,” or even “American,” which all require conformity to an already established ideal. While “libertarian” or “anarcho-capitalist” can be described as a collective identity, these activists are left to define and differentiate these identities as they see fit. This is why there is a huge amount of variance amongst libertarians, except for the few common principles that actually permit this variance.

These activists also make no attempt to draw conclusions from American history concerning their activism because, for them, their preferred society has actually never

²⁰⁰ Roderick T. Long, “The Libertarian Case Against Intellectual Property Rights,” in *Markets Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, ed. Gary Chartier & Charles W. Johnson, (London, UK: Minor Compositions), pg. 192

existed. The Tea Party libertarian activist from Iowa actually summarized the libertarian view of the “founding fathers”:

The founding fathers were men accomplished in the literary arts, and there is much to be gained from their insights. However, much in the tradition of the men they supposedly denounced, they were also men interested in gaining power and influence over others. As such, they are not to be viewed as righteous angels as some historians would have us believe, but neither were they the most despicable of tyrants, but fall somewhere between extremes.²⁰¹

Once again, the Tea Party libertarian activist from Staten Island supported this claim with the following statement:

George Washington could have set himself up as a monarch, but he was smarter than that. I think he understood that people need to believe that... Something to the effect that the people- you have to make them love their slavery or believe that they're free. That's what it is. 'There is none so hopelessly enslaved than he who believes he is free.' I think that's what democracy is- an illusion of freedom. It's an illusion of choice.²⁰²

Another source citing this difference is the interview done between Will Cain from CainandTable.com and Nick Gillespie from Reason.tv. Nick Gillespie responded to the question as to whether there was more influence from libertarianism today than at the Constitutional Convention by asserting, “I am not sure that libertarianism had that much influence at the Constitutional Convention, or at any point in time to be quite honest.”²⁰³

Furthermore, along with the lack of a fundamentalist approach towards American history, Tea Party libertarians have no aspirations to preserve or create a Christian nation. The position of religion is rather ambiguous amongst those in the Tea Party libertarian coalition, ranging from full atheists to committed Catholics.²⁰⁴ Given this wide-range of

²⁰¹ Interviewee Tea Party 7, via Facebook, 1 February 2013, Volume II, pg. 60

²⁰² Interviewee Tea Party 1, Vietnam Veterans Plaza, New York, 30 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 10

²⁰³ Will Cain, “Is the Tea Party a Libertarian Movement?,” *YouTube*, published on 26 October 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDxxB2Tgdsg>, viewed on the 19 May 2013,

²⁰⁴ Religion poses a rather complex challenge to libertarian thinkers. Instinctively, one would expect libertarians to be rather hostile to religion with the many references to a deference to authority, the threats of punishment in an afterlife, and the possibility of pre-destination. Ayn Rand was specifically against all forms of religion, as are some activists today like Stefan Molyneux. However, the irony is that “libertarians are [really] not for or against religion.” They are against any person alive currently who use religion to garner power,

beliefs or non-beliefs, the adoption of a theocratic agenda is rather difficult to develop as it does in radicalized Tea Party conservative organizations. Also, the creation of a centralized religious agenda that enforces conformity amongst those in the Tea Party libertarian coalition is profoundly contrary to libertarian principles. Just as libertarians declare that any secular coercive authority over any individual is immoral, they are equally opposed to any involuntary spiritual authority that dictates what and how to believe.

Yet, libertarians have produced their own version of radicalization that differs from what many have witnessed in Tea Party conservative groups, with Alex Jones as a classic example. Alex Jones hosts the radio show “Info Wars” and is a well-known name in libertarian circles, including the Tea Party libertarian coalition. What makes Alex Jones different from other libertarian activists, within and outside the Tea Party, is his use of fear to motivate Americans towards libertarianism. One example would be the conspiracy theory on FEMA and their relocation camps designed for national emergencies. He purports that these camps are actually a “secret plot” by those in the “New World Order” to eventually “depopulate” the United States and the rest of the world. While he does admit that it is not “coming right away,” “they’d like to kill us if they could. The process of that is training us so that they can put their hands on our wives and kids, take our guns, and turn our power off and boss us around. That is what they’re doing.”²⁰⁵ According to the activism of the likes of Alex Jones, the state is not only immoral, but it is also conspiring in actions

control, and coercion over other people today. Otherwise, religion, for libertarians, is a voluntary association that people should be able to choose whether they believe or not. Despite the first amendment in the Constitution, libertarians believe the American government is decidedly pro-religion and attempts to push Americans into believing something. “First, the tax code designates religious institutions as nonprofit enterprises and therefore impose no tax on their revenues . . . Second, contributions to religious institutions . . . are tax deductible. Third, most religious institutions are exempt from property taxation imposed by local governments. All these special provisions subsidize religious institutions . . . relative to for-profit activities and non-charities.” Jeffrey A. Miron, *Libertarianism: From A to Z*, (New York: Basic Books, 2011) pg. 147-8

²⁰⁵ AKNewsflash, “ALEX JONES- FEMA Camps for All Citizens,” *YouTube*, published on 25 October 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV40Pe3F_YI, viewed on 13 August 2014

that one could only associate with Nazi Germany. What is even more sinister is the blatant commercialism that InfoWars capitalizes on by advertising and selling products that will “help” Americans survive FEMA strikes and other examples of state violence.²⁰⁶ What is different between this radicalism and the one experienced by Tea Party conservatives is that Alex Jones is one activist with no hierarchy or organization to manipulate or enforce conformity around his ideals. Libertarians can listen to his rants and choose to reject his world view without any consequence or destabilization to their activism.

Furthermore, while the libertarian position on government may appear similar to the paranoia of the radicalized Tea Party conservatives, the substance behind voluntarism differentiates the two positions. Tea Party conservatives may state that they fear government, political parties, and other areas of public life, but what it appears that they actually fear is that others control the mechanisms of traditional power instead of themselves.²⁰⁷ Libertarians question the very institutions of power themselves and the ethics behind the threat of violence to enforce conformity. They and their coalition propose an alternative method to organize society that seeks to respect differences in a multicultural

²⁰⁶ Here is an example of one of the advertisements on the show: “I want to talk to you for a second about water. You know about Propure- our flag ship purification system. But check out some of our portable water filter products at inforwarsstore.com. The clearly filtered water pitcher. . . Also, for those of you on the go, we have the Athlete Edition Filtered Water Bottle and the RAD eliminator pro-filtered sports bottle that removes radiation. And keep in mind that we have replacement filters for all of these products. The ever popular grab and go back favorite- life straw. The Crystal Quest Shower filtration system. And the Aqua Pod Kit- great for mass storage of water. And while you are at the InfoWars shop, pick up a copy of book 31 Days to Survival.” AKNewsflash, “ALEX JONES- FEMA Camps for All Citizens,” *YouTube*, published on 25 October 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV40Pe3F_YI, viewed on 13 August 2014

²⁰⁷ The alliance with the Republican Party is one example. Furthermore, Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson outline very well how Tea Party conservatives are in fact very supportive of “big government” programs like Social Security and Medicare. “Small examples aside, Tea Partiers are not opposed to all kinds of regulation or big tax-supported spending. Rank-and-file Tea Party participants evaluate regulations and spending very differently, depending on who or what is regulated. . .” Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), pg. 56 This would also be consistent with what was stated in the first chapter on conservatism in general.

society while also creating a harmony within that society for people to coexist. As the libertarian activist from Cedar Rapids stated,

They're [Americans] joining because old beliefs no longer seem to hold water, and we see a way forward. People are joining because they believe liberty and freedom are at the heart of civilization's progress. People are joining now because the current system has begun to show stress fractures and we can all see it.²⁰⁸

This applies also with the differences between the principles of free and “freed” markets and fiscal responsibility and property rights.²⁰⁹

It is through the concept of voluntarism that the Tea Party libertarian coalition also escapes the transformation that occurs to Tea Party conservatives. By accepting the right of individuals to decide how to shape their own lives, libertarians provide flexibility to potential activists to incorporate preconceived ideologies within libertarian activism. While there are rather extreme activists within the Tea Party libertarian coalition, they do not represent a general transformation of the movement itself. There is a moderating or self-correcting influence amongst these activists that prevents them from imposing their views on others and that actually promotes dialogue between activists from different backgrounds. While they are not necessarily antagonistic against religion per se, there are atheists amongst their ranks that direct this coalition to a purely secular background. They do not fear civil society, public figures, or community programs, but they do resent being forced to follow an individual, to involuntarily join a government program, and to be forced into a civil society that they do not agree with.

²⁰⁸ Interview Tea Party 7, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1 February 2013 Volume II, pg. 57

²⁰⁹ While the difference between free and “freed” markets was outlined above, the difference between fiscal responsibility and property rights needs more explanation. The principle of fiscal responsibility is very paternal, very authority driven. Tea Party conservatives act as a watchdog over American citizens to monitor their spending. The Tea Party libertarian coalition conversely advocates an empowering principle. People are granted rights to property not only in law, but from nature. This grants the privilege and responsibility on citizens themselves, freeing them from observation and control.

The Tea Party Libertarian Coalition “Outgrows” the Tea Party

Despite avoiding the radicalization experienced by conservatives, the Tea Party libertarian coalition is dissatisfied with the Tea Party association because of certain libertarian principles that are incompatible with the popular image related to radicalized conservatives. The Tea Party largely involves the assertion of individual identity against a collective force, which in this case is the individual citizen against the collective force of the “government,” “state,” or whatever terminology that is adopted to describe it. While there are various subject matters that do arise in meetings across the country that deviate from this theme, these discussions are largely superficial in that Americans who join Tea Party organizations largely are concerned with this popular topic. Already at an early stage in Tea Party development, Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson noted that a libertarian’s suggestion to protest the Federal reserve “did not seem to get incorporated into the main thrust of the Tea Party group’s activism, and some of his suggestions- like protesting *against* Sarah Palin. . .- were immediately quashed by meeting organizers.”²¹⁰ Libertarians within the Tea Party largely take part to convert others to their way of thinking, which means they must identify with this popular image in order to be successful. Thusly, all of these points confine the Tea Party libertarian coalition within certain boundaries concerning what issues

²¹⁰ Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), pg. 38 This is actually an important point. At the beginning, it would seem that Tea Party conservatives and the libertarian coalition did mix together. However, at the time of the interviews conducted for this research, it would seem that a separation or segregation had occurred. The Tea Party libertarian activist from Staten Island, New York confirmed this evolution as well.

can be discussed. This has led many in the Tea Party libertarian coalition to question their association with the Tea Party and continue instead independently.

One such principle that deviates from this popular theme is the advocacy against the abuse of corporate power or what libertarians have labeled as crony capitalism. Despite espousing the virtues of “freed” markets, they are just as much against the abuse of power by private institutions as they are with public institutions. “Crony capitalism” or “corporate rent seeking” is a criticism of organized capital that either works closely with government to gain an advantage in the market or manipulates the political process for its benefit.²¹¹ The anarcho-capitalist activist Adam Kokesh outlines this position quite well by maintaining that “... together we can move toward a world without the military-industrial complex..., without a patent and copyright system that stifles innovation while securing monopoly profits for corporations, without central banks, which use force to prevent currency competition while devaluing the debt-based currency that is in your wallet...”²¹² The subject of the Federal Reserve is a particularly volatile topic amongst libertarians, which former Congressman Ron

²¹¹ “Rent seeking” refers to nonvoting, noncriminal activities that individuals or firms engage in with the purpose of either changing the laws or regulations or changing how the laws and regulations are administered, for the purpose of securing a benefit. A firm engages in rent seeking when it seeks to gain an economic privilege or advantage from governmental manipulation of the market environment.” Jason Brennan, *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) pg. 121 The campaign against the Federal Reserve Bank is one of the biggest issues for libertarians in the Tea Party, with the group “End the Fed” being one preeminent example. Here is an extract from an article on the “Reformed Libertarian” site: “When in school we learn of the Great Depression, we are taught that the so-called “free-market” is where we must point our fingers in blame. We are taught to memorize trigger words such as “capitalism,” “greed,” “speculation,” and “laissez-faire.” . . . Well here is a different view. The unpopular and “politically incorrect” view. The view that points the finger at the Federal Reserve and its money-printing (inflationary) schemes, which only exists because of the power and decree of the centralized state. This is the view that you will rarely hear. And that so-called “free market” advocates like Paul Ryan and Mitt Romney could never explain.” “The Fed: Cause of the Great Depression,” *Reformed Libertarian/Reformed Theology/Libertarian Polity*, <http://reformedlibertarian.com/articles/economics/the-fed-cause-of-the-great-depression/>, viewed on 16 May 2015

²¹² AdamKokesh, “The Greatest Conspiracy,” *YouTube*, published on 26 September 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFKtgrchgMQ>, viewed on 17 October 2012

Paul often criticized while in office and on campaigns.²¹³ While criticisms of the Federal Reserve do receive some mention in the Tea Party because of its association with government institutions, which libertarians claim is a private bank (in actuality it is an independent regulatory body, the follow up to these issues are largely unaddressed within Tea Party organizations, including those which are libertarian in influence.²¹⁴

In connection with the absence of criticism concerning crony capitalism, libertarian principles on inequality and community are also missing in Tea Party rhetoric. It seems counter-intuitive that libertarians would have any principle concerning inequality, as they are opposed to any regulatory body that intervenes in the market to ensure equality. However, they just frame the topic slightly different from modern liberals today, stating “The problem isn’t that some people have more; it’s that some people don’t have enough. The poor of the third world die of starvation and disease, not inequality.”²¹⁵ Therefore, libertarians are very concerned about inequality in a sense, but have different concepts of where it originates.²¹⁶ Using the example of Archer Daniels Midland, Jason Brennan outlines

²¹³ Ron Paul made the following claim recently: “I think if nothing else came out of the crisis of ’08 and ’09 is the fact that the Fed was a big player and if you understand the monetary policy they created the problems, they created the mal-investment, and all the debt and the bubble.” Eduardo89rp, “Ron Paul: Transparency is The First Step Towards Reforming the Federal Reserve,” *YouTube*, published on 4 November 2013,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfLC7bDoJo0>, viewed on 4 April 2014. To understand further the libertarian position on the Fed, as it is so important, Jason Brennan outlines the following: “Some classical and neoclassical liberals believe the Federal Reserve System is needed to keep the supply and demand for money in equilibrium. Others believe the Federal Reserve makes things worse. For instance, the economist George Selgin argues that after the creation of the Fed, US banking became more unstable, not less.” Jason Brennan, *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), pg.66

²¹⁴ “For instance, a man in his mid-thirties, a regular attendee at Massachusetts Tea Party meetings, brought fliers outlining a plan to get America’s financial house in order, beginning with the abolishment of the Federal Reserve- an idea popular with Ron Paul followers. The man was warmly received, but his recommendations did not seem to get incorporated into the main thrust of the Tea Party group’s activism. . .” Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), pg. 38

²¹⁵ Jason Brennan, *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) pg. 136

²¹⁶ One libertarian position of inequality is that markets today are rigged towards inequality. “Any discussion of the cash nexus in the real world- of the everyday ‘market institutions,’ economic relationships, and financial arrangements that we have to deal with in this government economy- needs to take account not only of the

this difference in stating, “ADM makes money because the government rigs the market in its favor. . . Libertarians say that when people acquire wealth through unjust means, they are not entitled to that wealth.”²¹⁷ This point ties directly into their position on crony capitalism, citing it as the leading cause of inequality in the United States today. In allowing individuals to determine a place in which to live unrestrained from borders and government oversight, libertarians believe that opportunities will arise naturally with a stronger foundation that will last longer.²¹⁸

Related with the concern for inequality is the libertarian sense of community, which again might prove to be counterintuitive. The concern for community does not refer to a form of collectivism, but more with how civil society evolves in reference to the problems that arise when individuals interact.²¹⁹ Tying into their practice of voluntarism to enact their principles of non-coercive authority, “freed” markets, and property rights, libertarians also hold that voluntary association is the foundation for community, not government.²²⁰ The Tea Party in general has become associated with religion, but this often represents the limits

ways in which government limits or prohibits market activity, but also the ways in which government, rather than erasing markets, creates new rigged markets- points of exchange, cash nexuses which would be smaller or less important, or radically different in character, or simply would not exist at all, but for the intervention of the states.” Charles W. Johnson, “Markets Freed from Capitalism,” in *Markets Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, ed. Gary Chartier and Charles W. Johnson, (London, UK: Minor Compositions) pg. 63

²¹⁷ Jason Brennan, *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) pg. 134

²¹⁸ Jason Brennan, *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) pg. 142

²¹⁹ One example would be the important issue amongst many Tea Partiers concerning the environment. “The next, more complicated type of environmental issue affects many property owners- this time the noxious fumes go all over town. To complicate matters, the nuisance is caused jointly by many smokestacks. The transaction costs of solving the problem through common law become so high that the tort solution no longer works. In other words, something valuable (clean air), jointly consumable and not easily segmented, has been degraded.” Charles Murray, *What it Means to be a Libertarian: A Personal Interpretation*, (New York, USA: Broadway Books, 1997) pg. 115

²²⁰ “Americans are a people who relish associations- clubs, fraternal organization, associations for the preservation from wildlife to battlefields, associations for assistance to everyone from widows and orphans to teamsters and the Sons of Italy.” Charles Murray, *What it Means to be a Libertarian: A Personal Interpretation*, (New York, USA: Broadway Books, 1997) pg. 136

on how the Tea Party addresses voluntary association and definitions of community. For instance, labor unions are a type of association and, if voluntary, one that libertarians are willing to tolerate if they are not coercive. Considering the radicalized nature of many Tea Party organizations today, this topic would often clash with what many consider as familiar with the Tea Party today.

This strain has led libertarians to question their Tea Party affiliation and adopt a more independent approach to their activism in order to incorporate more libertarian topics. One libertarian activist who defined himself as a “21st century libertarian” announced on YouTube: “Stop inviting me to Tea Party meetings and rallies. All you’re doing is perpetuating the myth that libertarians are de-facto Republicans when that is not even remotely true or remotely accurate.”²²¹ A member of the LGBT Libertarians from North Carolina stated concerning the Tea Party: “Another tragedy. A movement starting off in the right direction which was ultimately co-opted by neo-conservatives. Also [their] solutions are misguided.”²²² With the emergence of radicalized conservative organizations and the inability to practice the full range of their activism, many activists within the Tea Party libertarian coalition began to omit any association with the Tea Party in the course of their activities.

However, there are also other activists in the Tea Party libertarian coalition who are approaching the situation differently, in that they are seeking to re-take ownership over

²²¹ Liber Tee-TwoOne “21st Century Libertarian – Stop Inviting me to Tea Party meetings!” *YouTube*, published on 4 March 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxKnArAM7JE>, viewed on 19 May 2013. This is an example of how libertarians today are trying to create an independent image of themselves away from conservatives.

²²² Interviewee Independent 3, via Facebook, 17 December 2012, Volume II, pg. 232 This activist was not actually a member in a Tea Party organization at the time of the interview. However, he did have experience working within an organization that seems to have been a conservative-based one. He related his experience: “With the tea party I have attempted to show them the inconsistency and impotency of the constitution with the principles of property and non-aggression.” He did not feel his message was received well.

how to define the boundaries of the Tea Party banner. Catherine Bleish, a libertarian activist outside the Tea Party libertarian coalition, warned activists: “I have a message for the Tea Party. I would encourage you to consider not being sucked into the left-right paradigm. I know a lot of Tea Partiers look to the Republican Party for vision; they look to Sarah Palin, they look to a lot of the “great leaders” like Glenn Beck. But ultimately they are all just talking heads.”²²³ There was also a Tea Party libertarian coalition member who posted a video on YouTube that was supposed to act as a rallying call for libertarians to “reclaim” that ownership. He stated, “The BTPC has decided to throw this, the Inner Harbor Tea Party, up for grabs. We would encourage those of the Constitution and Libertarian Parties, of that mind set at least, to come forward and allow their voice to be heard. . . to offer a perspective not seen on major network cable news, AM, FM radio, magazines, anywhere.”²²⁴ Therefore, there is also a simultaneous drive amongst some in the Tea Party libertarian coalition to reshape the conversation back towards their main points of activism.

Therefore, the assumption made by many concerning the Tea Party as a centralized movement that pushes a pro-corporate agenda hidden behind social conservative values is an exaggeration. The existence of the libertarian coalition with its focus on life without the state, “freed markets,” and the notion of property rights clearly contradicts a coherent conservative nature of the Tea Party. While astroturfing is a presence within some Tea Party organizations and the Republican Party has harnessed the Tea Party persona to garner election victories, each organization is nevertheless largely autonomous and members can

²²³ Dailyteaparty, “Catherine Bleish’ Message to the Tea Party: Live in personal freedom,” *YouTube*, published on 19 September 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpk8l360tao>, viewed on 7 February 2013. Catherine Bleish is a popular activist in libertarian circles. She would classify as a libertarian anarchist, as her advocacy centers on how the American state is a police state and should be abolished. According to her, people should live in a society defined completely by voluntarism.

²²⁴CrackrockKid, “Re-Take the TEA PARTY, Libertarians UNITE,” *YouTube*, published on 16 April 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGjopJ-PTng>, viewed on 19 May 2013. This activist was from Baltimore and it can be assumed BTPC is somehow connected to the Baltimore Tea Party.

decide their agenda as they desire. Furthermore, while conservatives and libertarians may have used the Tea Party simultaneously as organizing agents, it became clear that neither were converging and conflict between both grew as time progressed, forcing the Libertarian Coalition to search for a new political home.

Chapter 3

The Occupy Libertarian Community

When considering how the Tea Party and Occupy are depicted as polar opposites in national media outlets, it is surprising to think that via PorcFest there would be a connection between them, never mind a consensus. Indeed, Occupy Wall Street (OWS) has become the focus for those researching the various occupations that occurred during 2011 and 2012 and the organizations that continued after their closure. Their focus was simple: “As protests have spread from Lower Manhattan to cities and towns across the country, they have made clear that indignation against corporate greed and economic inequality is real and deep.”²²⁵ OWS’s answers to this greed and inequality appeared to be greater government oversight over how capitalism and different markets operate, which entailed a certain relinquishment of individual rights. As it was the pioneer occupation and by far the most well-known in the country, OWS provided a perceived template on how to interpret the multitude of other occupations occurring across the country. This perception could not be further from the principles of the Tea Party libertarian coalition, which was present at PorcFest 2013.

However, OWS was only a prototype that caused it to develop in a slightly unique way, focusing initially on the abuses that emanated from the institutions of finance, with

²²⁵ Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri, “The Fight for ‘Real Democracy’ at the Heart of Occupy Wall Street,” *Foreign Affairs*, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/print/98542>, viewed on 20 June 2012

responses to those abuses being more varied than implied from the above perception.²²⁶

An activist in OWS also expressed how “Occupy” had other motivations that indicated a more inclusive mission with diverse forms of activism:

I see a common mission, which is usurping the infrastructure of coercion and control that has been taken by the extremely wealthy and delivering it so that the people are in charge of the levers of power. My personal view is that [it] comes through the revival of the commons, especially in terms of technology.²²⁷

Occupy New Hampshire provides further insight into these comments by diverging from the popular impression of OWS in two ways. Firstly, Occupy New Hampshire was much more local in its pursuits, making it a better comparison for other occupations like Occupy Boston or Occupy Washington, DC. Secondly, Occupy New Hampshire started out as a single organization, but eventually split into two separate organizations- one keeping the original name and the other adopting the title Occupy New England. Consequently, this fracturing of Occupy New Hampshire into two separate entities not only provides insight, but it also raises further questions about what exactly Occupy represented.

Ultimately, Occupy is an attempt by American citizens to redefine the concept of community, which includes the popular image associated with OWS but is not exclusively limited to that initial protest. This redefinition seeks to reverse the perceived erosion of community by the dominance of a small minority that emerged after society fractured into much smaller and isolated units.²²⁸ Daniel T. Rogers, with *Age of Fracture*, demonstrated how society in the 20th century had become fragmented and fractured between specific

²²⁶ Indeed, the name Occupy Wall Street is very indicative of this particular focus. It wasn't termed Occupy New York City (although there were other separate organizations who did have such titles [e.g. Occupy Manhattan], which truly highlights that there is something more to Occupy than an opposition to finance.

²²⁷ Interviewee Occupy 1, Zuccotti Park, New York City, 29 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 80

²²⁸ Robert N. Putnam also approached this subject with *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, (London, UK: Simon & Schuster, 2000 Kindle Edition), but his work went further into notion of “social capital” and how to measure it within the United States and how to compare it to the past.

ethnic, religious, and/or other affiliations that had a degrading effect on society.²²⁹ While critics and researchers label Occupy as a “movement,” it is rather a catalyst for various movements to organize under one banner and exchange and further their ideologies to either reverse this degradation or learn how to cope with the fracturing expressed by Rogers. New Hampshire was one example of how Occupy activists have different visions of community for the future that are not compatible and led to the development of two different branches.. Even within OWS, with its particularly focused mission, varying visions existed concerning how to address the problems related to Wall Street capitalism.

Amongst these divergent viewpoints, two ideologies developed as strands for activists to congregate around in order to provide some greater direction to the prolific development of Occupy organizations. One ideological strand would be progressivism, or the descendent ideology from the early twentieth century that is referred to as progressivism today, which was outlined in Chapter 1. The other focus consists of a variety of activists united by libertarian ideals relatively foreign to Americans that posits Occupy as an outreach tool for these activists.²³⁰ While it appears foreign to Americans, these activists actually do have a history in the United States, if not often referred to in political discourse. Occupy presented an opportunity to reintroduce this American tradition of “left libertarianism” and bring new perspectives to the image of general libertarianism in the United States. While they are often perceived as selfish, corporate-friendly, individualists,

²²⁹ The *Age of Fracture* follows in the precedent left by Robert N: Putnam, but focuses more on how Americans have created sub-identities that have caused a “fracturing” effect on their community.

²³⁰ Noam Chomsky, a libertarian socialist himself, explained this differentiation quite well. He stated, “How can I call myself a libertarian socialist, which is a contradiction in terms given the meaning of the term libertarian in the United States. . . Well, you’re right that the terms I’m using are contradictory in the United States, but that’s a sign of the perversity in American culture. Here, the term libertarian means the opposite of what it meant to everybody else all through history.” Rippley Ripple, “Noam Chomsky- Libertarian Socialism Contradicting Terms| YouTube,” *YouTube*, published on 5 May 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wriQGI5NGOM>, viewed 4 September 2014

the Occupy libertarian community, demonstrated that they could also be anti-corporate, cooperative-based, and community minded activists.

The Occupy libertarian community seized the opportunity to promote alternative solutions to the problems facing the country today and question much of what other Americans seemed to take for granted. Indeed, while they do possess some commonalities with Occupy progressives, the two philosophies diverge sharply on how they envision societal order. While the Occupy libertarian community did want to arrest the abuses of economic power and resolve income inequality, they are also in favor of minimal or no government and protested against taxation. They not only denied the implausible nature of this position as seen in modern politics, but they also advocated that these positions actually can work in tandem and be mutually supportive. As a result, it is difficult to place Occupy libertarians on the current political spectrum in much the same way as the Tea Party libertarian coalition.

This distinction between Occupy progressives and the libertarian community is not only important when discussing the differences in their priorities, but also when considering their differing experiences during the occupations and the aftermaths. While the much publicized paralysis of the General Assemblies plagued Occupy progressives, Occupy libertarians were able to circumvent this problem. Despite the irony of the General Assembly having its roots in the libertarian tradition, it was used mostly by Occupy progressives to produce an enforced consensus amongst all activists. As a result, many within the Occupy libertarian community avoided the General Assembly and developed

independent groupings.²³¹ Subsequently, they continued to develop and recruit independently, meaning their activism survived largely unaffected after the closure of the occupations after January 2012.

As a result of bypassing the General Assembly process and placing a division between themselves and Occupy progressives, the Occupy libertarian community marked a clear independence and self-enforced separation from the other activists. As Occupy largely became associated with progressive goals specifically within Occupy Wall Street, the Occupy libertarian community questioned whether the mutual association was still relevant. Regarding their vision of community, ideals existed that were not only in conflict with the progressive agenda but were also not even considered. This also had the ultimate effect of demonstrating how Americans are beginning to move beyond the “left-right” categorization and develop a new political continuum to operate in.

Occupy Libertarian Community

Notwithstanding the negative connotations that are often associated with the Occupy libertarian community in popular culture, their involvement and that of other libertarians have received a more rational approach by various researchers of the Occupy

²³¹ “Furthermore, the GA is now no longer the only decision-making body within OWS: The Formation of a Spokes Council, consisting of representatives from each of the working groups, was latterly agreed on so that the movement could more easily coordinate financial and legal decision making.” Writers for the 99%, *Occupying Wall Street: The Inside Story of an Action that Changed America*, (London, UK: OR Books, 2011) Kindle Version, Location 372

phenomenon.²³² Devin Balkind through the subject of free/libre/opensource (FLO), stated, “Since so many people at Occupy Wall Street identify themselves as anarchists, one would imagine that this message would be appealing to Occupiers- and it is.”²³³ Yet, despite mentioning their role in Occupy, these activists and their ideals have received only token attention.²³⁴

The demographic make-up of the Occupy libertarian community contrasts with the make-up of Occupy organizations in general. The Occupy libertarian community tended to be lower middle class or working class, more likely to be self-educated, and more racially homogenous (i.e. extensively Caucasian).²³⁵ Occupy libertarians are far more likely to espouse revolutionary change by removing these structures and systems, which is ideologically derived but also buttressed by their life experiences. Furthermore, Occupy libertarians were not just a fringe element in the various organizations across the country,

²³² “You see this video we are showing- Again, May day, death of capitalism, violence, once again, by the left in this country. Give me an example of a Tea Party incident where they needed to set up rape tents to protect women from sexual assault, where Tea Party members were literally taking a crap on a police car, urinating, doing drugs the way we saw during the Zuccotti Park incident?” “WhatsNowOn, “Hannity Gets in Shoutfest with Guest Over Who The Real ‘Anarchists’ Are Occupy or The Tea Party?” *YouTube*, published on 3 May 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rscp3Rh2L4>, viewed on 26 July 2014

²³³ Devin Balkind, “The FLO Consensus,” *Occupying Political Science*, ed. Emily Welty, Matthew Bolton, Meghana Nayak, and Christopher Malone, (New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013),, pg. 124

²³⁴ There is one work that deals specifically with anarchism in Occupy. It is *Translating Anarchy: The Anarchism of Occupy Wall Street* (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2013) from Mark Bray.

²³⁵ The collaborative work, *Occupying Wall Street*, outlined this demographic difference quite well by describing the division in the encampment of Zuccotti Park. The writers observed that “The western [end] appeared, on one level, to be more organized: the tents located there were generally larger, providing accommodation for sizeable groups, and they were clustered together in such a way that . . . two clear walkways stretched down to the edges of the park.” While this may not provide too much, they then followed this statement with “In general it seemed that the eastern end of the park accommodated the more reform-orientated and middle class of the movement’s supporters, while the western end housed more working class and politically uncompromising activists.” It was further supported with “The eastern end of the park played host to the People’s Library, the LGBTQ caucus, Informacion en Espanol, and the Press, Media Relations, the Legal working groups and, of course, the General Assembly. . . The western end, by contrast, was home to more overtly radical interventions: a table that advocated taking back land for Native Americans; the Class War Camp, a revolutionary anarchist working group, as well as several other revolutionary booths...” The Writers for the 99%, *Occupying Wall Street*, (London, UK: OR Books, 2011) Kindle edition, pgs. 61-2 (Starting Location 701), pg. 64 (Starting Location 720). This may only provide an account of the New York occupation site, but it does provide evidence of this divide, both ideologically and demographic-wise. With regards to self-education, Occupy libertarians are very much operating in a similar fashion to that of the Tea Party libertarian coalition.

but made up a substantial minority, or even a majority in some cases. Many occupations across the country were littered with independents that either refused to identify with a political party or had not yet chosen a political affiliation. A CUNY study also found that 33.7% identified with a third party/other affiliation or did not identify with any party, which would have constituted a significant proportion of the Occupy libertarian community.²³⁶ The Occupy Boston survey uncovered 131 independents or activists with no affiliation out of 281, which is almost half of those surveyed.²³⁷ What is more striking in the survey of Occupy Boston is that there were more self-identified libertarian-anarchists than Democrats and Progressive-Social Democrats, and only a couple activists fewer than the Marxists.

These libertarians in Occupy sharply diverge from the “rugged individuality” and “pro-business” normally associated with libertarianism in popular culture. Instead, Occupy was and is the home of a wide range of libertarian subgroups ranging from left-libertarians to anarchists. One type of Occupy libertarian are left-libertarians, which are very much like what Americans popularly perceive as libertarians with modifications on certain principles. Left-libertarians adhere to the notion of individual property rights and a market-based economy. However, they are also those who believe that there are legitimate instances where private property rights infringe on individual freedoms.²³⁸ Some “left-libertarians”

²³⁶ This further support provides interesting statistics. One interesting statistic is the disillusioned democrat group, making up 8.4% of Occupy Wall Street, which is just as viable ground for Occupy libertarians as Occupy progressives. The same would be for the Occupy independents, who constitute 7.9% of the organization. The most interesting and debatable statistics would be those dealing Republicans, with 0.5% identifying as Republican and 0.3% as Independent leaning Republicans. These activists, while not appearing obvious that they would join the ranks of the Occupy progressives, is questionable that they would work with Occupy libertarians as described above.

²³⁷ “Occupy Boston Primary Issue Survey,”

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AqBxYhIfsdpAdHhSSGl1dnVsVFVaOTIUa3RFck04RHc#gid=0>, viewed on 4 September 2014

²³⁸ Left Libertarians are interesting variety of Occupy libertarians in that they exist largely apart from the other types because of their position in favor of free markets. There are a variety of differences concerning these libertarians but they fall into two camps. One is camp is that type represented by Michael Otsuka with *Libertarianism without Inequality*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), Published to Oxford Scholarship

advocate that collective ownership of some property, particularly intangible examples or property that is in scarcity, like air or oil, actually is more enhancing of individual freedom. One example would be the earth's atmosphere, which provides air for everyone to breathe but cannot be quantified for individuals to own and circumvents the problem facing libertarians concerned about the climate.²³⁹ By polluting, the property that is jointly owned by everyone in that particular community, others will be entitled to compensation or restitution for the damage incurred. While the core of the philosophy still depends largely on an individual focus, this libertarian strand does incorporate a community mentality, even if rather minimal, that many would not expect.

Another example would be what has become known as libertarian socialism, which many would consider to be an oxymoron because socialism has become synonymous with state structures and coercive force. Yet, for these libertarians, socialism has been co-opted by progressives or state socialists to maintain a system of dominance by providing the bare minimum for everyone else.²⁴⁰ These libertarians are "convinced that a Socialist economic order cannot be created by the decrees and statutes of a government, but only by the solidaric collaboration of the workers with hand or brain in each special branch of

Online, doi: 10.1093/0199243956.003.0001, which largely embraces the version of libertarianism most Americans embrace with modifications to ameliorate the negative effects of the free market like the communal ownership of some property. The other is represented by the collection of essays in the volume *Markets not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, (London, UK: Minor Compositions) ed. by Gary Chartier and Charles W; Johnson. These left libertarians hold the principle of "achieve leftist ends by libertarian means." These libertarians are more private property based than those adhering to the ideals of Michael Otsuka. Historical precedents to these works would be B.R. Tucker with *Instead of a Book* (as presented earlier), and the *New Libertarian Manifesto*, (Christopher D. Seely, 2006) by Samuel Edward Konkin III.

²³⁹ Michael Otsuka stated, "The phrase 'equally advantageous shares of unowned worldly resources' that I employ in the egalitarian proviso should be read as a term of art that I neutral among a range of familiar welfarist and resource-based metric of equality." Michael Otsuka, *Libertarianism without Inequality*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), Published to Oxford Scholarship Online, doi: 10.1093/0199243956.003.0001, pg. 25

²⁴⁰ A current example of libertarian socialists would be the much-publicized Noam Chomsky with works like *Manufactured Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, (London, UK: Vintage, 1994). Historical examples would be Pierre Proudhon with *What is Property?*, (New York, USA: Cosimo, 2007) and Bertrand Russell with *Roads to Freedom: Socialism, Anarchism, and Syndicalism*, (USA: Jefferson Publication, 2015).

production.”²⁴¹ They also believe in the cooperative “ownership of the instruments of labour by all, made effective through industrial groups bound to one another by free contract, so long as this right was not made in the exploitation of others and as long as the full product of his individual labour was assured to every human being.”²⁴² This libertarianism, while relatively unknown, does also have a foundation within the history of the United States, reaching back to the early nineteenth century.²⁴³ They bring a fresh perspective, despite this tradition, to anti-statist politics in the American political system that differs from the stereotypical activism of business friendly politics or that of individually based libertarianism.

The final constituency of the Occupy libertarian community is actually a subset of libertarian socialism (it is used interchangeably but there are differences) and probably the most misunderstood: anarchists. When approaching the topic of anarchism in Occupy, the events in Oakland involving vandalism and criminal behavior are at the forefront of public opinion.²⁴⁴ However, genuine anarchists specifically practice non-aggression in their activism against the state, which, to them, “is force, and for it . . . is the right of force, the triumphant argument of the needle-gun, of the chasse-pot.”²⁴⁵ While other libertarians are

²⁴¹ Rudolf Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice*, (Edinburgh, UK: AK Press, 2004), pg. 62-3

²⁴² Rudolf Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice*, (Edinburgh, UK: AK Press, 2004) pg. 5

²⁴³ John Curl in *For All the People* outlined a history of cooperatives and syndicalist organizations. “The history of cooperatives and cooperative movements in America chronicles the struggles of our working population. The history documents how cooperatives were an integral part of numerous American communities in many time periods, and how the working people of this country turned time and again to cooperation for both personal liberation and as a strategy of achieving larger social goals.” John Curl, *For All the People: Uncovering the Hidden History of Cooperation, Cooperative Movements, and Communalism in America*, (Oakland: USA, PM Press, 2009), Kindle Edition, Location 399

²⁴⁴ There was controversy over the role of anarchists in the violence that erupted in the Oakland, California Occupy site. This will be looked into further later on in the chapter.

²⁴⁵ Mikhail Bakunin, *God and the State*, (New York, USA: Dover Publications Inc., 1970), pg. 83 Mikhail Bakunin is one example of long tradition of anarchism. One current example would be David Graeber from Occupy. Other examples would be Peter Kropotkin with *The Conquest of Bread*, (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2015), Emma Goldman with *Anarchism and other essays*, (The Project Gutenberg EBook, 1 March 2009)

tolerant of minimal levels of state governance, anarchists hold that any level of state governance corrupts society.²⁴⁶ Examples of traditional anarchist thought are Mikhail Bakunin with *God and State*, William Godwin with *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, and Rudolf Rocker with *Anarcho-Syndicalism*. They all posit that society, groups, and individuals are capable of governing themselves while simultaneously creating the necessary community and collective behavior they believe is essential for the survival of humanity.

While community libertarians seems “alien” to Americans, there is a history concerning this philosophy in the United States that is relatively unknown. One example would be the “first three years in America from 1620 to 1623,” where “the Pilgrims of Plymouth farmed and worked communally, depositing all the products of their work into a common warehouse and taking their needs from a common store. The first New England colony began as a commune, and later reorganized into a cooperative community.”²⁴⁷ The American Revolution provided further examples, as “in New York, they attempted to organize a large-scale labor-exchange and barter system around a ‘bank exchange,’ aimed primarily at serving individual producers.”²⁴⁸ During the Great Depression: “Los Angeles County had the largest self-help concentration in Southern California, where about 75,000 people in 107 groups participated in the harvest of fall 1932. Many people in nearby Orange

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2162/2162-h/2162-h.htm>), and Alexander Berkman with *What is Anarchism?* (London, UK: Phoenix Press, 1989).

²⁴⁶ The supposed motivations behind this corruption vary amongst anarchists. Mikhail Bakunin outlined how “From the origin of historic society down to the present day there has been always and everywhere exploitation of the compulsory labor of the masses-slaves, serfs, or wage-workers- by some dominant minority; oppression of the people by the Church and by the State.” Mikhail Bakunin, *God and the State*, (New York, USA: Dover Publications Inc., 1970), pg. 20 However Charles Ross presented a differing source in stating “People in government are not bad or stupid, on the contrary, but the contract between people and government forces them to claim something which no sensible person should claim, that government can understand and predict the massive complexity of the contemporary world, and manage it on our behalf.” Carne Ross, *The Leaderless Revolution*, (London, UK: Simon & Schuster, 2011) pg. 18

²⁴⁷ John Curl, *For the People: Uncovering the Hidden History of Cooperation, Cooperative Movements, and Communalism in America*, (Oakland, USA: PM Press, 2009), Kindle Version, Location 653

²⁴⁸ John Curl, *For the People: Uncovering the Hidden History of Cooperation, Cooperative Movements, and Communalism in America*, (Oakland, USA: PM Press, 2009), Kindle Version, Location 1302

County also formed self-help cooperatives.”²⁴⁹ These are just a few of the examples of a tradition in the United States that paved the way for the development of community libertarianism.

The greatest example of the tradition that helped establish community libertarianism in the United States though, would be the Populist Movement. The Populist Movement emerged during the rapid industrialization of the country in the late nineteenth century, which had exacerbated post-Civil War divisions. The powerful and corrupting influence that organized capital projected on political parties created a diminishing effect on American democracy for many citizens. By taking advantage of the polarization found amongst Americans as a result of Civil War memories, organized capital was able to lobby for legislation and government deals unobserved (e.g. land speculation by “railroad barons”).²⁵⁰ The manipulation of politics produced even more sinister effects after the “Crime of ‘73” created a depression, leaving the majority of Americans to suffer with an unresponsive political system.²⁵¹ Thusly, the Populist Movement was a reaction against this

²⁴⁹ John Curl, *For the People: Uncovering the Hidden History of Cooperation, Cooperative Movements, and Communalism in America*, (Oakland, USA: PM Press, 2009), Kindle Version, Location 3678

²⁵⁰ In the late nineteenth century, politicians used divisions and sectarian sentiments remaining after the Civil War to garner election victories over the rival political parties. The Republicans, dominant in the north, used the image of the “Bloody Shirt” to infuse guilt over the Democratic party because of their strength in the south. Democrats used the concept of “loyalty to the party of the fathers” in the south to continue a measure of continued resistance to north in opposition to the Republican Party. Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America*, (Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 1978) p. 6-7

²⁵¹ There was a desire from the bondholders to rid silver from the specie monetary system because silver production had increased in efficiency, forecasting higher coinage of the metal that would lower the expected profit windfalls. “Partly as a result of disingenuous explanations by its congressional sponsors, the bill [to introduce the gold-standard and drop silver] attained final passage in January 1873 without ever a roll call vote in the Senate,” which became known as the “Crime of ‘73.” Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America*, (New York, NY, USA: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 16 “It took some time for the crime to be discovered. A gradually deepening economic depression provided the necessary awareness. The unexpected collapse of the famed investment banking house of Jay Cooke in the autumn of the year ignited panic in an already nervous Eastern financial community. Unemployment rose, demand softened, and wage cuts followed.” There were a few parallels to what occurred in 2007-2008. Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America*, (Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 1978) pg. 16-17. As mentioned early as well, Charles Postel’s *The Populist Vision*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007) is an excellent revisionist approach to the Populist Movement.

polarization and manipulation that offered Americans an alternative to address the ills of the country. It promoted a collective-cooperative initiative that “was, at bottom, a movement of ordinary Americans to gain control over their own lives and futures, a massive democratic effort to gain that most central component of human freedom-dignity.”²⁵²

However, the Populist Movement became something much more in that it sought to reinterpret the traditional image of citizenry within the United States to correspond and reflect the rapidly changing nature of civil society. Before Populism, Americans, while indeed active together in their small local communities, saw themselves as individual actors that relied on republican representation to achieve political and societal goals.²⁵³ Populism initiated a shift in this mentality by drawing on an alternative history concerning cooperative and collective action and provided independent structures to allow citizens themselves to define progress and resolve problems.²⁵⁴ It was a revision of the tradition mentioned above that portrayed citizens as the central component to republican society, towards a greater focus on democratic government. Indeed, Lawrence Goodwyn argues a similar point in stating, “Populism is the story of how a large number of people through a gradual process of self-education that grew out of their cooperative efforts, developed a new interpretation of their society and new political institutions to give expressions to these interpretations.”²⁵⁵

²⁵² Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise : The Populist Moment in America*, (New York, NY, USA: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 197

²⁵³ There were exceptions, most notably the abolitionists and the Free Soil Movement. However, they were more the exceptions that confirmed the normality of American society.

²⁵⁴ The Populist Movement provided a foundation itself for what we call “participatory democracy” today, even if it is a more limited embrace. Sources on this topic would be Theda Skocpol, with *Democracy Diminished: From membership to management in American Civic Life*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), and David Reynolds with *Democracy Unbound: Progressive Challenges to the Two Party System*, (Boston, MA, USA: South End Press, 1997).

²⁵⁵ Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise : The Populist Moment in America*, (New York, NY, USA: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 88

Events at the end of the nineteenth century, though, led to this tradition being either excluded or marginalized from American politics throughout the twentieth century. The Populist Movement ended as a failure after transforming into the “People’s Party,” leaving its reputation ruined and with most Americans viewing it as a reactionary and backwards.²⁵⁶ Coupled with Populist failure, the Haymarket affair in 1886 tarnished libertarian socialism and anarchism thereafter and led to the further alienation of the community libertarian tradition.²⁵⁷ James Green highlighted the response of the nation at the time:

And yet affixing blame for the tragedy did little to diminish the acute anxiety that swept the nation after the bombing. Indeed, identifying the anarchists as secret conspirators responsible for the lethal deed led to wild exaggerations of the menace these subversives posed to social order. In New York City, for example the times reported that workers who ‘placed responsibility for their poverty upon the bourgeoisie’ were armed with rifles and bombs and were prepared with plans to bring down ‘the ruling class.’ Even after these rumors disappeared from press, the specter of radicalism would remain alive in ‘the bourgeois imagination.’”²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶ The St. Louis Convention of 1889 was a pivotal event for the Populists, as it represented the end of their reinterpretation of the populist tradition. Charles Macune’s introduced the sub-treasury plan, which was to take the place of the Texas Exchange in order to liberate Populist farmers from established systems of credit. It required government support to guarantee the two percent interest rates outlined. This initiated a shift in Populist thinking in favor of political involvement, followed quickly by the formation of the People’s Party in 1892, and resulted in a dramatic change in rhetoric. Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise : The Populist Moment in America*, (New York, NY, USA: Oxford University Press, 1976), pg. 167 Instead of allowing citizens themselves to shape and construct their society and economy, the People’s Party assumed the privilege of representing the will of the entire nation in an attempt to justify their quest for power. However, it was a false assumption of the People’s Party to assume that the transfer of the collective-will originating from voluntary self-governance to the coercive force of the federal government would be successful. The poor results in the northeast emphasized a need to create a nationwide appeal that the People’s Party did not possess to garner victories in nationwide elections. This deficit created a vulnerability to special interests that eventually destroyed the party and, ultimately, the movement. A realignment to increase its base began that provided an opportunity for certain interests concerned with “the increased coinage of the white metal” operating under a faux-Populist banner. . Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America*, (Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 1978) pg. 216

²⁵⁷ “May 3 was a momentous day in American labor history on another count. In Chicago, policeman fired on striking workers who were taking part in a nationwide work stoppage in support of the eight-hour day. Four strikers were killed. The following day a bomb exploded in Haymarket Square at the conclusion of a peaceful rally called to protest police brutality. Eight policemen were killed. Although the identity of the bomber was never discovered, four anarchists were executed for the act, and the labor movement in general was blamed for it.” Robert C. McMath, Jr., *American Populism: A Social History 1877-1898*, (New York: USA, Hill and Wang, 1992) pg. 76

²⁵⁸ James Green, *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement and the Bombing That Divided Gilded Age America*, (New York, USA: Anchor Books, 2009) pg. 9

With the red scares of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries also incorporating this fear of libertarian socialists and anarchists, this tradition became ostracized from American society.

As a result, recognizing high profile individual examples of Occupy libertarianism today is not straightforward. Furthermore, the image of Occupy included the mantra concerning “organizations without leaders” and the adherence that each activist speaks for themselves, which further obscured prominent activists. Todd Gitlin highlighted the activist pride in “leaderlessness”:

The movement was prepared to admit that it might be convenient for the journalists if they had leaders to flock to, but to the activists it was a point of pride that they could do just fine without them, and indeed, that the leader fetish was neurotic and laughable.²⁵⁹

It was also confirmed by activists interviewed for this project who stated proudly “We do not believe in hierarchy. We allow our voices and opinions be that [the organization]. But no one person or group is hierarchal to the other.”²⁶⁰

Nevertheless, there are prominent examples that receive attention for the model they present for other activists who are searching for inspiration to develop their activism further, with Noam Chomsky being one example. He has been an active participant in libertarian socialism for decades, demonstrating once again that the “foreign” characterization of this type of libertarianism is a result rather of public ignorance to the ideology. He also published his presentations made at some occupations when Occupy was at its height in popularity under the title *Occupy*. In this pamphlet he continued in the attempt to add historical gravitas to Occupy in stating, “Primarily, I think this should be

²⁵⁹ Todd Gitlin, *Occupy Nation: The Roots, The Spirit, and The Promise of Occupy Wall Street*, (New York, USA: itbooks, 2012), pg. 101

²⁶⁰ Interviewee Occupy 6, Houston, Texas via Facebook, 21 December 2012, Volume II, pg. 153

regarded as a response, the first major public response, in fact, to about thirty years of a really quite bitter class war that has led to social, economic and political arrangements in which the system of democracy has been shredded.”²⁶¹

Another example is one of the originators of Occupy- David Graeber. David Graeber is an anthropologist professor at Goldsmiths University, but he was also one of the activists at the meeting at Bowling Green in New York during the summer of 2011 that eventually developed into Occupy Wall Street. He is an anarchist, who acts as a contrast to the vandalism and violence that many associated with Occupy Oakland. In his book, *The Democracy Project*, Graeber highlights the importance of anarchism to the libertarian community within, as well as to Occupy in general, in stating, “Clearly, the movement did not succeed despite the anarchist element. It succeeded because of it.”²⁶² He also emphasizes the importance of converting non-libertarians over to anarchism and other community libertarian outlets:

In fact, there is every reason to believe that not only are Americans far more willing to entertain radical solutions, on either side of the political spectrum, than its media and official opinion makes are ever willing to admit, but that it’s precisely OWS’s most revolutionary aspects- its refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the existing political institutions, its willingness to challenge the fundamental premises of our economic system- that is at the heart of its appeal.²⁶³

Graeber, while not a popular name to those outside the organizations using the Occupy label, is an extremely prominent figure to Occupy libertarians who would soon outgrow Occupy as the libertarian coalition outgrew the Tea Party.

²⁶¹ Noam Chomsky, *Occupy*, (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2012) pg. 54

²⁶² David Graeber, *The Democracy Project: A History, A Crisis, A Movement*, (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2013), pg. 89

²⁶³ David Graeber, *The Democracy Project: A History, A Crisis, A Movement*, (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2013), pg. 98

Libertarianism in Occupy

While these high profile individuals provide an introduction into whom Occupy libertarians are and what they believe, it is also important to understand what libertarians within Occupy hoped to achieve (especially given the constant reminder from critics about the absence of demands.) Libertarian socialists, left-libertarians, and anarchists, who were already working outside established politics, searched for further avenues to conduct their already alternative political agenda and found allies in the disillusioned left. In fact, Occupy largely had libertarian and anarchist roots from the original planning session in Bowling Green, New York.²⁶⁴ In contrast to the Occupy progressive focus, Occupy libertarians developed similar critiques of society without the need for the state and established non-governmental organizations in order to renew community. The critique of the 99% by libertarians recognized that inequality is not an aberration of the socio-economic system, but endemic to it and necessitated its upheaval. The problem associated with the Citizens' United ruling for libertarians was, and still is, not a symptom of corruption within a functional political system, but rather a systemic failure of representative politics and the inability of Americans to develop their own legislation. The 2008-2009 economic crisis was not a result of inadequate regulation from the point of view of many libertarians, but was a systemic failure of the perennial growth economic paradigm.

The popular slogan "We are the 99%" developed as a way of communicating to citizens the various economic insecurities Occupy activists felt and how they saw themselves

²⁶⁴ David Graeber, *The Democracy Project: A History, A Crisis, A Movement*, (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2013), pg. 46-7 While Adbusters and MoveOn.org placed advertisements concerning "occupying" Wall Street, it was the first General Assembly held by David Graeber and his associates that started the symbolism.

as victims of a hidden class war.²⁶⁵ David Graeber, in the days before 17 September 2011 (the first day of occupying Zuccotti Park), sent an email outlining a new protest that he thought should be called the “‘99%’ movement” against the major political parties that “govern in the name of the 1% of Americans who received pretty much all the proceeds of economic growth.”²⁶⁶ Activists like Graeber came to realize that “it seems as if there aren’t any more rich countries. Just a whole lot of rich people. People who got rich looting the public wealth and exhausting natural resources around the world.”²⁶⁷ The occupations during the last few months of 2011 presented an opportunity for these activists to present these arguments to Americans, who appeared more open to such notions given the state of desperation that the nation found itself in after the recession. Following in the tradition of the Seattle protests of the WTO in 1999, Occupy libertarians were attempting to display to Americans the rampant problem of inequality and economic injustice in modern society.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ Indeed, Astra Taylor and Keith Cassen found in their experience that “By writing ‘I am the 99%’ or in some cases ‘We are the 99%’ at the end of their litanies, the individuals who have chosen to post their post-industrial miseries on the web were doing something that Americans of recent generations have been averse to doing. They were actually creating class consciousness, for themselves and those around them.” Marco Roth, “Letters of Resignation from the American Dream,” *Occupy: Scenes From Occupied America*, ed. Astra Taylor, Keith Gessen, and editors from *n+1*, *Dissent*, *Triple Canopy*, and *The New Inquiry*, (London, UK: Verso, 2011) pg. 26

²⁶⁶ David Graeber, *The Democracy Project: A History, A Crisis, A Movement*, (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2013), pg. 40 The full email was the following: “What about the ‘99%’ movement? Both parties govern in the name of the 1% of Americans who have received pretty much all the proceeds of economic growth, who are the only people completely recovered from the 2008 recession, who control the political system, who control almost all financial wealth. So if both parties represent the 1%, we represent the 99% whose lives are essentially left out of the equation.”

²⁶⁷ Naomi Klein, “The Most Important Thing in the World,” *Dreaming in Public: Building the Occupy Movement*, ed. Amy Schrager Lang & Daniel Lang/Levitsky (Oxford, UK: New Internationalist Publications Ltd., 2012), pg. 45

²⁶⁸ The Seattle protests in 1999 were part of the Global Justice movement. “The Global Justice movement pioneered a carnivalesque style of protest, and planned its movement events using direct democratic organizational forms that participants hoped could prefigure a form of decision-making between groups that were from different places yet focused on a common end. This is also the movement in which the Black Bloc-masked activists who sometimes destroy property or engage in self-defense against the police- first made its appearance on the US media stage.” Nicholas Smaligo, *The Occupy Movement Explained: From Corporate Control to Democracy*, (Chicago, USA: Open Court, 2014), pg. 79-80

However, the solutions of Occupy libertarians were and are fundamentally more revolutionary than just an awareness campaign, which included looking to replace the current socio-economic order with one that they believed would prevent the development of such inequality. An activist from Occupy Washington, DC stated, “We saw the occupation as a first step in what we thought needed to be done, which is building a broad base, independent, non-violent movement for real social transformation. We are not trying to reform the system, we need a system that works.”²⁶⁹ The Occupy libertarian community maintained that equal opportunity is inherently a conservative goal and strived for a broader inclusion when considering equality.²⁷⁰ The libertarian solution to inequality largely centered on the elimination or the extensive limitation of the state, which they saw as a tool for the “1%” to institutionalize inequality. In eliminating the state, they would organize society on a voluntary basis organized around the varying conceptions of individual rights and communal property.”²⁷¹

Furthermore, Occupy libertarian activists were rather hostile or indifferent to the American Dream in the context of inequality, viewing it as a distraction to issues that truly mattered to American citizens. Todd Gitlin, author of *Occupy Nation*, even highlighted how they developed an alternative “dream” on Twitter and stated, “It turned out there was another dream; this one circulating on Twitter: ‘Dear Americans, this July 4 dream of

²⁶⁹ Interviewee Occupy 10, Washington, DC- via Skype, 14 February 2014, Volume II, pg. 182

²⁷⁰ Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, (London, UK: Harper Perennial, 2008) pg. 48 “But they recognize that the principle of equal opportunity is fundamentally conservative since existing society with its hierarchy of values only supports the opportunity to develop those talents and abilities which it considers worth developing. The application of the principle will also increase inequalities by creating a society ruled by a meritocracy.”

²⁷¹ One example would be the article by Roderick T. Long entitled “A Plea for Public Property.” In it he stated, “What I would want to insist on, though, is that some role for public property is important for a libertarian society. An all-private system can be oppressive, just as an all-public one can be; but a system that allows networks of private spaces and public spaces to compete against each other offers the greatest scope for individual freedom.” Roderick T. Long, “A Plea for Public Property,” Charles W. Johnson, *Markets, Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, ed. Gary Chartier and Charles W. Johnson, (London, UK: Minor Compositions), pg. 168

insurrection against corporate rule,' with the hashtag #occupywallstreet."²⁷² For Occupy libertarians, the American dream was a false promise that kept citizens complacent to the perceived injustice and control via the state they submitted themselves to every day. They framed their argument by emphasizing how Americans are made to believe that "you are one step away from it, you are almost out of it, one more year and you'll be set and you won't have to worry about this stuff."²⁷³ Those in the Occupy libertarian community maintained that "it is more and more bullshit."²⁷⁴ This libertarian sentiment could also be found amongst the many cardboard posters so popular at Occupy displaying phrases similar to the following: "Dear 1%, We fell asleep for a while, just woke up, Sincerely, the 99%."²⁷⁵ These activists instead wanted citizens to reject the notion of the American Dream and strive to define a new paradigm that liberates individuals from all forms of dominance.²⁷⁶

²⁷² Todd Gitlin, *Occupy Nation: The Roots, The Spirit, and The Promise of Occupy Wall Street*, (New York, USA: itbooks, 2012). Moreover, in the Occupy progressive section, Marco Roth's article in *Occupy! Scenes from Occupy America* was mentioned in reference to the American Dream. However, in addition, his comment about what the tumblr site, where activists noted their struggles in society, are also insightful in this case. "He or she writes a letter of resignation from the American Dream and pledges allegiance to the 99 percent movement, the goals of which remain as yet undefined even as it builds strength with every person who, as the tumblr puts it, 'gets known.'" Marco Roth, *Occupy! Scenes from Occupy America*, pg. 27 Not only were Americans lamenting the status of the American Dream, but there was also an appearance of rejecting the notion and moving onto a new promise, which in many cases coincided with the Occupy libertarian branch.

²⁷³ Interviewee Occupy 1, Zuccotti Park, New York City, 29 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 84

²⁷⁴ Interviewee Occupy 1, Zuccotti Park, New York City, 29 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 84 They followed these comments with additional: "And then there's the people who actually are attaining the American dream, the immigrants that are coming here, the lower classes who are making their way up and think that there's no ceiling. But the ceiling is getting lower and lower and its pushing the middle class down and the people that are rising up are not rising up to anything particularly good."

²⁷⁵ Jóvenes en Resistencia alternative, "Solidarity Statement: We Walk Asking, We Reclaim by Occupying," *Dreaming in Public: Building the Occupy Movement*, ed. Amy Schrager Lang & Daniel Lang/Levitsky (Oxford, UK: New Internationalist Publications Ltd., 2012), pg. 66

²⁷⁶ This does not necessarily mean that every Occupy libertarian is in favor of abolishing the state. In a sense, this is what divides libertarians from anarchists. Noam Chomsky is one perfect example in stating: "It's not a strategy, it's not a strategy at all. It can't be a better strategy. The strategy of eliminating the state is back at the level of having peace and justice. How do you precede to eliminate the state? Can you think of a way of doing it? If there were a way of doing it in the existing world everything would collapse and be destroyed." This does not mean libertarians are in favor of state structures, but they also believe anarchist demands are put forward too soon. mr1001nights "Chomsky: 'abolishing the state' not a strategy- YouTube," published 27 March 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiqPCRTzOBw> viewed 8 September 2014

This position stands in stark contrast to Occupy progressives who draw on the tradition that developed the concept of the American Dream and seek to reclaim it as a lost ideal. Indeed, the American Dream is a central tenet in progressive ideology and it would be extraordinary for Occupy progressives to take a similar position to that of Occupy libertarians. Ironically, the phrase “American Dream” appears to have originated from James Truslow Adams, who was disillusioned with the “progressive” Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in his book *The Epic of America*, mentioning it thirty one times.²⁷⁷ The central quote of Adams’ *The Epic of America* stated the American Dream was:

That dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.²⁷⁸

While Adams was disillusioned with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s handling of the Great Depression, this description aligned specifically with the theories of those like John Dewey, Walter Lippmann and Reinhold Niebuhr. However, this notion is an anathema for Occupy libertarians not because of a supposed hypocrisy to Adams meaning, but at the very essence of his intent.²⁷⁹ The emphasis on social order and pseudo-defined hierarchies in society clash significantly with the rather fluid nature of libertarian society and the ability to

²⁷⁷ Adams has been sighted as the creator of this phrase, but it is possible that someone else was using it beforehand. However, our understanding of the phrase today appears to have come from Adam’s *The Epic of America*. “While it’s not clear whether he actually coined the term or appropriated from someone else, his publisher’s reluctance to use it suggests ‘American Dream’ was not in widespread use elsewhere. In any event, Adams invoked it over thirty times in *The Epic of America*, and the phrase rapidly entered common parlance as a byword for what he thought his country was all about, not only in the United States but in the rest of the world.” Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003) pg. 4

²⁷⁸ James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America*, (Boston, USA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1931) pgs. 214-5

²⁷⁹ In essence, in Chapter One, Occupy progressives were protesting what they thought was the hypocrisy surrounding the American Dream. They believed that its essential meaning was sound, but that they application of that principle was incomplete. When they heard politicians and business speak of the American Dream, they believed that they were hiding alternative motives behind a propaganda campaign, using an almost sacred principle. Occupy libertarians believed something fundamentally different.

redefine society as one sees fit. Therefore, in their stance against the American Dream in tandem with a quest to abolish the state in order to eliminate inequality, Occupy libertarians demonstrated how they are defining themselves apart from Occupy progressives and transcending modern political definitions of left and right.²⁸⁰

The second concern for the Occupy libertarian community, which is derivative of the first concern for inequality, is the dissatisfaction with representative democracy as exemplified in the Citizens' United ruling from the Supreme Court.²⁸¹ While they were primarily concerned with the endemic inequality that appeared to be plaguing the country in September 2011, the libertarian community also recognized their lack of ability to confront this issue within the representative democratic system. The theme concerning how ineffective the political system appeared to be was epitomized by the following statement, "'I don't need sex. I get fucked by the government every day!' That's neither pro-government, nor pro-big government. It's certainly not Keynesian, nor socialist-quite the contrary."²⁸²

Indeed, this position contradicted the impression that Occupy organizations were universally in favor of "big government" solutions to the problems of inequality. In fact, the

²⁸⁰ In chapter one, the positions of Occupy progressives, who were emblematic of the desires of the American left, concerning the American Dream were outlined clearly. Rhetoric about the American Dream is prolific in Tea Party conservative circles as well. In fact, in 2014 the Tea Party Patriots added a new theme to their principles. "It all starts with our new Tea Party Patriots theme. TPPatriots, 'Pursue your American Dream.'" "Promoting the American Dream: A Message That Works!" *YouTube*, published on 9 June 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8Mvg8iY9tg>, viewed on 15 June 2015

²⁸¹ The Citizens United ruling could be summarized as follows: "Citizens United heralds the Court's return to its *Lochner* era ways. The case, which invoked the First Amendment to nullify restrictions on corporate political spending, 'elevate[s] corporations to a level of deference which has not been seen at least since the [*Lochner*-era] days when substantive due process was regularly used to invalidate regulatory legislation thought to unfairly impinge upon established economic interest,' according to Justice John Stevens in his dissenting opinion." Joel Bakan, "Psychopaths, Inc.: On Corporate Personhood," *The Occupy Handbook*, ed. Janet Byrne, (London: UK, Back Bay Book, 2012), pg. 355

²⁸² Bernard E. Harcourt, "Political Disobedience," *Occupy: Three Inquiries in Disobedience*, (London, UK: University of Chicago Press, 2013) pg. 50

Occupy libertarian community believed that independent citizen action was more efficient and more responsive to civil matters than any state structure, with many citing Occupy Sandy as an example.²⁸³ Occupy developed a response to the “super-storm” Sandy that struck New York in 2012. Their response was recognized as having “a better capacity to help people” with “the National Guard . . . taking advice and training from Occupy Sandy coordinators.”²⁸⁴ While the Citizens’ United decision further accentuated how disconnected the average citizen was from representative democracy by allowing unlimited funding from corporate sponsors, Occupy Sandy demonstrated how the libertarian community approach to society was proving more fruitful.

The solution for the Occupy libertarian community was and is to jettison the representative system entirely and for every American to assume control of society directly themselves. For these activists, the notion that representatives could predict and implement solutions tailored to address the whole country while also accounting for the differences and complexities in each region was unrealistic.²⁸⁵ Two libertarian activists from Washington DC stated their goals were the following: “Our strategy was to go on to two paths, that’s what we call our actions: Stop the machine, create a new world.”²⁸⁶ They saw their goals as working towards a more defined vision of what they are seeking to change:

²⁸³ Occupy Sandy was a transformation of various working groups in Occupy Wall Street into an emergency response team in reaction to the devastation caused by the superstorm Sandy in the fall of 2012. One source highlighting the success of this activism would be the New York Times article entitled “Occupy Sandy: A Movement Moves to Relief,” <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/11/nyregion/where-fema-fell-short-occupy-sandy-was-there.html?pagewanted=all&module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Ar%2C%7B%221%22%3A%22RI%3A10%22%7D&r=0>

²⁸⁴ Interviewee Occupy 12, New Hampshire, USA- via Skype, 31 January 2013, Volume II, pg. 200

²⁸⁵ Carne Ross highlighted this sentiment by stating, “People in government are not bad or stupid; on the contrary, but the contract between people and government forces the, to claim something which no sensible person should claim, that government can understand and predict the massive complexity of the contemporary world, and manage it on our behalf. “ Carne Ross, *The Leaderless Revolution*, (London, UK: Simon & Schuster, 2011) pg. 18

²⁸⁶ Interviewee Occupy 10 and 11, Washington, DC, via Skype, 14 February 2013, Volume II, pg. 185

“economic democracy, . . . , where people have control of their homes. . . and more influence over the local and national economy. . . And the second thing is participatory government, where people are not only just voting but where people are participating in making decisions.”²⁸⁷ Another activist from Houston, Texas also highlighted the desire for greater involvement of citizens in government by stating

It means a lot to me! That is why I am fighting so hard. “We the People” have been ignored and put off by our own government. Our government seems to have forgotten that it’s “We the People” who make this country great. Since the government has acted on their own accord, we now see the state of the country, which is not doing well at this time.²⁸⁸

In direct contrast to the progressive positions, Occupy libertarians were advocating more “participatory government” that envisioned a more active role for citizens in the actual governing process.²⁸⁹ This antagonism towards state institutions is another challenge to the standard left-right affiliations, as both Tea Party conservatives and Tea Party libertarians appeared to be making equivalent positions.

The final concern for Occupy libertarians is the notion of perennial growth as a motivational force for economic organization, which they view as the source of inequality and protected through the process of representative democracy. These activists view the economic recession of 2008-2009 as a direct result of this economic model that, in their eyes, sold debt to citizens for no reason other than to produce more debt in order to garner

²⁸⁷ Interviewee Occupy 10 and 11, Washington, DC, via Skype, 14 February 2013, Volume II, pg. 186

²⁸⁸ Interviewee Occupy 6, Houston, Texas- via Facebook, 20 December 2012, Volume II, pg. 154-6

²⁸⁹ This concept of participatory government is not to be seen as akin to participatory democracy, which is a popular Occupy progressive position. Participatory democracy was an original progressive position that sought to include eligible Americans (which have changed over the past century) within the selection process of candidates for office and through referendums for legislative policy. Also, it allowed for the recalling of state officials in some states if performance was considered unsatisfactory by their constituents. However, there was a limit (as emphasized by Walter Lippmann and Reinhold Niebuhr) in how far Americans should contribute. Participatory government seeks to break through that limit and include Americans within every facet of decision making that occurs in politics today. This is supposedly to have the effect of making politics more local, more reactive to constituent needs and wishes, and more representative of the population, for better or for worse. In that sense, Americans would be assuming a greater responsibility, along with power in the decision making process.

higher growth.²⁹⁰ According to the libertarian community, “there is no greener pasture than the United States because we just buy everything like crazy without thinking about it. We go into debt just to buy a mattress. We are consumers.”²⁹¹ In perceiving the generation of growth in this manner, inequality is virtually guaranteed in that for growth to continue there must be property inequitably distributed throughout the population.²⁹² The Occupy libertarian community also believed that the continuous growth paradigm was responsible for other problems the nation faced in addition to inequality, like environmental degradation or the rapidly expanding prison population. The activist from New York tied all these issues together in stating, “Because one leads to the other. If I get my environmental justice, that requires there to be social and economic justice. So these three pillars have to be done in tandem.”²⁹³ This was in contrast to Occupy progressives, who believed that the continual growth system was sound but corrupted by irresponsible behavior.

Furthermore, Occupy libertarians also saw perennial growth as the cause of what could be termed the “Age of Fracture.” Robert Putnam, with *Bowling Alone* raised the concerns about the erosion of “social capital” in the country, which meant the bonds that

²⁹⁰ There was no sector of the economy that represented this notion better than the housing market, which was the cause of the economic recession with regards to its collapse in 2007-8. “The ability of consumers to pay off mortgages and replace them with new ones just as, say, the interest rate was about to increase is part of what kept the bubbly going. It also points to the fact that, contrary to popular perception, the great machinery of the subprime lending market was not built to enable people to buy homes. Instead, its main purpose was to allow people to borrow against the equity in their homes- the driver of the majority of the risky loans that would have brought down the financial sector without a government bailout.” Bethany McClean, “Your House as an ATM,” *The Occupy Handbook*, ed. Janet Byrne, (London: UK, Back Bay Book, 2012), pg. 85-6

²⁹¹ Interviewee Occupy 12, New Hampshire, USA- via Skype, 31 January 2013, Volume II, pg. 204

²⁹² One example of this would be the proliferation of student loan debt in the United States. “Although the defense of public education may seem a remote or peripheral concern of the Occupy movement, the connection between the two is indisputable. There is a financial pipeline that travels from public universities directly to Wall Street, and what is trafficked through this pipeline is not anything positive- rather it is debt.” While students may be indebted by these student loans, overall, the American economy is still growing as a result of them. Michelle Ty, “The Coming General Strike,” *Dreaming in Public: Building the Occupy Movement*, ed. Amy Schrager Lang & Daniel Lang/Levitsky (Oxford, UK: New Internationalist Publications Ltd., 2012), pg. 242

²⁹³ Interviewee Occupy 1, Zuccotti Park, New York City, 29 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 82

connected Americans as a nation. According to Putnam, Americans “we are reasonable content about our economic prospects . . . but were not equally convinced that we were on the right track morally or culturally.”²⁹⁴ Daniel T. Rogers furthered this decline in social capital in highlighting how American society had become fractured along ethnic, economic, and individual definitions. Through “more and more domains of social thought and argument, the terms that had dominated post-World War II intellectual life began to fracture. One heard less about society, history, and power and more about individuals, contingency, and choice.”²⁹⁵ It was against this sentiment that Occupy libertarians, as well as Occupy progressives, were attempting to redefine community and develop a new cohesiveness.

While Occupy progressives had their own solutions, the Occupy libertarian community proposed alternative solutions to the status quo of continuous growth that they perceived as equivalent to a “cancer” in the human body that resulted in this fragmentation.²⁹⁶ All of these alternative structures or systems may have different emphases, but they are all linked through one theme: sustainability. Whether it is through democratic ownership of production, a resource-based economy, or any other focus, Occupy libertarians are passionate that the replacement has a sustainability quotient to it.²⁹⁷ The activist from Occupy Wall Street at the start of the chapter used Sim City, the

²⁹⁴ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, (London, UK: Simon & Schuster, 2000) Kindle Edition, Location 280

²⁹⁵ Daniel T. Rogers, *The Age of Fracture*, (London, UK: The Belknap Press, 2011), Kindle Edition, Location 64

²⁹⁶ “We live in an infinite growth paradigm. The economic paradigm that we live in today is a Ponzi scheme. Nothing grows forever. It’s not possible. There’s a great ecologist- James Hillman- once wrote, “The only thing that grows in the human body after a certain age is cancer.” Michael C. Ruppert quote in TZMOfficialChannel, “Zeitgeist: Moving Forward|Official Release|2011,” *YouTube*, published on 25 January 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Z9WVZddH9w>, viewed on 7 February 2013

²⁹⁷ There were two basic alternatives proposed in Occupy organizations from libertarians, with the rest being derivative of these. One is a resource based economy where money is abolished and an economy is based on the availability of resources, but also guaranteeing that everyone has equal access to these resources by

game, to emphasize that “we are in a state where its progress for progresses sake.” More specifically, “Its growth, everything is about growth,” which was represented in this game. “SimCity doesn’t allow you to create a sustainable city. It has to continue growing or you lose the game.”²⁹⁸ What these activists mean by sustainability, for example, is a way to design a system to maintain standards of living for all of humanity while also ensuring that the human population exists in balance with the environment through technological automation and energy alternatives.²⁹⁹ Another example would be the worker-owned industries advocated by anarcho-syndicalists and the cooperative businesses that do exist in corners of the present day economy. These alternatives again bring a revolutionary approach that challenge current political definitions and also demonstrate a further divergence away from Occupy progressives with their adherence to the perennial growth paradigm.

What brings all these points together is the concept of community, which Occupy libertarians are trying to redefine to correct the problems many are experiencing in modern day America. Whether it is regarding inequality, the ineffectiveness of the political system, or the desire to escape from growth economics, the Occupy libertarian community is addressing matters that effect Americans in and as a community. They have also adopted sub-issues that are intertwined with this notion of community, such as including equal rights

ensuring abundance (which is derivative of Marxism ultimately). The other is the classic socialist and anarchist position of worker owned cooperatives where production replaces capital as the owners.

²⁹⁸ Interviewee Occupy 1, Zuccotti Park, New York City, 29 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 88

²⁹⁹ A more specific reference would be the Zeitgeist Movement mentioned earlier, which had members within specific occupations, that advocates a resource-based economy, which holds as foundational the approach to assessing the availability of necessary resources and developing the economy upon. The Zeitgeist Movement started with three films (Zeitgeist: the Movie, Zeitgeist Addendum, and Zeitgeist: Moving Forward) that eventually developed into an activist organization that advocates resource-based economy. It builds upon the foundations left by Jacques Fresco and his Venus Project from the mid-twentieth century.

activists, who were also interested in expressing their desire to redefine community.³⁰⁰ It helped expand the ranks of the Occupy libertarian community towards greater, if only marginally, heterogeneity in areas such as race, gender, and sexual orientation. Even the occupations themselves became self-contained communities, if only for a brief time, that attempted to put these visions into practice. Most importantly though, they also shatter the image of Occupy being a radical wing of the Democratic Party and present how Americans are beginning to transcend political definitions like “left” and “right” by developing ideological strands that transcended these known categories.

Escaping Paralysis and Outgrowing Occupy

While Occupy was intended to be a rejuvenation of community, it was plagued by organizational paralysis or conflicting messages that turned it into a rather dysfunctional community in itself. Occupations in cities like New York, Boston, and Washington, D.C. experienced a paralysis in their General Assemblies after the initial development, stalling political action. However, the paralysis was just confined to the General Assembly, leaving the operations outside of the governing body unaffected. Working groups were also a common feature in Occupy and contrasted sharply to the General Assembly because of the fragmenting influence they had on activists. The Occupy libertarian community quickly

³⁰⁰ These groups largely identified with Occupy progressives, but some, especially transgendered groups, did drift towards the libertarian focus. One example would be the “Indigenous Platform Proposal for ‘Occupy Denver,’” which would have found similar voices amongst Occupy libertarians in their calls for autonomy, self-governance, and sustainable economics. The American Indian Movement of Colorado, “An Indigenous Platform Proposal for ‘Occupy Denver,’” *Dreaming in Public: Building the Occupy Movement*, ed. Amy Schrager Lang & Daniel Lang/Levitsky (Oxford, UK: New Internationalist Publications Ltd., 2012), pg. 150-153

embraced working groups and escaped the paralysis of the General Assembly based on their disdain for conformity and hierarchy. Therefore, this paralysis was largely an Occupy progressive problem and ultimately led to the fracture experienced in New Hampshire, with libertarians and progressives following their own separate agendas.

The Occupy libertarian community adopted a type of activism that promoted separate umbrellas of action that converged on general community libertarian principles. Mikhail Bakunin established a foundation for modern libertarianism in Occupy to organize themselves and conduct their activism by specifically rejecting “all legislation, all authority, and all privileged, licensed, official, and legal influence, even though arising from universal suffrage, convinced that it can turn only to the advantage of a dominant minority of exploiters against the interests of the immense majority in subjection to them.”³⁰¹ Noam Chomsky furthered the position of Bakunin by suggesting the empowerment of all citizens through their own experiences and through his participation at a talk at Occupy Boston by emphasizing that “education doesn’t mean just telling people what to believe. It means learning things for ourselves.”³⁰² Furthermore, they were also providing an American spin on a largely European tradition, meaning that community libertarianism finally had an inroad into American politics again. They wanted each citizen to conduct their own decision making process in order to garner a greater understanding of the world and better their community.

The second Occupy libertarian concern to replace representative democracy did not involve its emplacement with a similar system. There was a consensus amongst libertarians interviewed concerning the unviability of the state as an agent for change. They felt that for

³⁰¹ Mikhail Bakunin, *God and the State*, (New York, USA: Dover Publications Inc., 1970), pg. 35

³⁰² Noam Chomsky, *Occupy*, (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2012) pg. 44

“far too long, we’ve been silenced by the power that comes from our government. As silly as it sounds, our issues have and continue to fall on deaf ears in local and national government.”³⁰³ Another example would be the labor activist from Occupy Wall Street, who stated:

How could- we’re told to vote, we’re told that by voting we’re going to be putting people in office who are going to stand up for us. And these sages in court, you know, are supposed to have our best interest at heart. . . We have no protection. We have none. All we have is our bodies and minds. . . And me coming here is me saying that I can’t count on government, I can’t count on business.³⁰⁴

The growing rejection of the state was derived from several libertarian and anarchist theories, largely originating from the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. One common interpretation to this theory is that of Rudoff Rocker, who stated there was a common theme in “the desire to free society of all political and social coercive institutions which stand in the way of the development of a free humanity.”³⁰⁵ This position did not receive much attention because of its unorthodox style in leftist politics and the confusion over the initial similarities with conservative grassroots activists and their anti-government positions.

³⁰³ Interviewee Occupy 6, via Facebook, 21 December 2012, Volume II, pg. 150 This activist concerns was echoed by the remarks from the activist from Iowa who state, “The main reason I think people are joining is because of tyrant behavior not only by my government, but all around the world we are seeing the very same kind of treatment from all governments that are supposed to be for the people and by the people, but that isn’t the case as we speak today,” and the activist from Occupy Wall Street who stated, “And so I think anarchism, the idea that they are no rules, why should one person have authority over anyone else, is a core principle, which leads into why should these people have power over us because they have an enormous amount of money. Why should certain people’s voices speak louder in what should be a republic? Why do our representatives seem to value the input of the few over the many. I think that the root of that comes into the powerlessness, people feel powerless, it feels like nothing can be done.” Interviewee Occupy 9, via Facebook, 18 January 2013, Volume II, pg. 172; Interviewee Occupy 1, Zuccotti Park, New York City, 29 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 81

³⁰⁴ Interviewee Occupy 3, Judson Memorial Church, Washington Square Park, New York, 03 September 2012, Volume II, pgs. 111-112

³⁰⁵ Rudoff Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice*, (Edinburgh, UK: AK Press, 2004), pg. 9 For a more modern take on these theories, Charlie Ross highlights how “it is not clear that contemporary political institutions, whether national or international, do in fact successfully give sufficient attention to the common interest of humanity. Instead, its increasingly evident that these institutions elevate the interests of the most powerful interest groups over collective interests, and thanks to the short-termism of the political vice and the beggar-thy-neighbor ‘zero-sum’ calculus of international bargaining, neglect long term primary need, including the environment.” Carne Ross, *The Leaderless Revolution*, (London, UK: Simon & Schuster, 2011), pg. 68

This obviously led to immediate friction with Occupy progressives, who felt committed to the traditions of Walter Lippmann and Reinhold Niebuhr, as well as John Dewey. Occupy progressives, with their preference for professional organizations and the delegation of power, had little interest in the libertarian community insistence of keeping the General Assembly pure. Frustrations were building up, such as in these words of an Occupy progressive in Oregon:

In the major urban centers, they had more of an influence there than they did here in Ashland and Medford. But I think that was just due to the smaller populations. It only takes a very small number of anarchists or left-libertarians to throw the consensus process of its rocker.³⁰⁶

Therefore, there were fundamental differences between the two strands of Occupy that carried the potential of bringing about rather large problems if confronted.

These differences eventually translated ironically into a general hostility towards the General Assembly dominated by an Occupy progressive elite that sought to control and manipulate Occupy activists to goals they felt were important. The General Assembly was “the central concept of contemporary anarchist activism, which is premised on the idea that revolutionary movements relying on coercion of any kind only result in repressive societies.”³⁰⁷ However, many libertarians recognized after the occupations had been established that this anarchist development had been co-opted by Occupy progressives.

Perhaps most divisive of all was the split of opinion among occupiers concerning the General Assembly and its decisions. Notwithstanding its ostensibly consensus-based structure, the General Assembly was, in the eyes of some, and particularly among residents of the western half of the park [Occupy libertarian section of Occupy Wall Street], a body . . . not truly representative of the totality of the park’s round-the clock-occupiers.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ Interviewee Occupy 5, Oregon, USA- via Skype, 04 November 2012, Volume II, pg. 150-1

³⁰⁷ Hannah Chadeyane Appel, “The Bureaucracies of Anarchy,” *Dreaming in Public: Building the Occupy Movement*, ed. Amy Schrager Lang & Daniel Lang/Levitsky (Oxford, UK: New Internationalist Publications Ltd., 2012), pg. 112

³⁰⁸ Writers for the 99%, *The Writers for the 99%, Occupying Wall Street*, (London, UK: OR Books, 2011) Kindle edition, Location 753

In response to this development, the libertarian community either cited procedural changes to block the progressive agenda or withdrew to the various working groups to develop their agendas independently. However, in retreating to the working groups, the Occupy organizing agent began to fracture, an ironic development for activists seeking to redefine community. As Matthew Bolton and his colleagues stated, “Occupiers struggled to find a balance between synchronization and autonomy of different Working Groups and interests within the diverse movement.”³⁰⁹

However, while the Occupy libertarian community had avoided the conformity enforced by Occupy progressives, activists within the libertarian community were not always constructive or positive to outsiders and sometimes even contradictory to their own ideals. One example was the collaboration with the “hacktivist” organization known as Anonymous.³¹⁰ This collection of hackers and programmers loosely adhering to anarchist principles put out a statement of solidarity with Occupy organizations across the country, with the Guy Fawkes mask so prominent with Anonymous becoming a further symbol of Occupy. It was the pinnacle of decentralized grassroots activism in that even participants in the organization did not know each other, hence the name.³¹¹ However, it was also an

³⁰⁹ Matthew Bolton, Emily Welty, Meghana Nayak, and Christopher Malone, “We Had a Front Row Seat to a Downtown Revolution,” *Occupying Political Science*, ed. Emily Welty, Matthew Bolton, Meghana Nayak, and Christopher Malone, (New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pg. 9

³¹⁰ How to define Anonymous is fairly difficult. Its very nature makes it virtually impossible to pin down certain attributes and traits. However, the following quotation provides some insight into what this “organization” was. “This article is not about becoming an Anonymous member. Anonymous is not an organization nor a group. Anonymous is an idea, and ideas are bulletproof. If you want to be Anonymous, you are already ‘in.’ EVERYONE and ANYONE can be Anonymous: spread truth, share any post, video or tweet regarding Anonymous or its operations, or write & submit your own article to AnonHQ! Just remember, always stay anonymous, do not show your face or reveal your identity, for this is the power of Anonymous.” “Be Anonymous – AnonHQ AnonHQ,” *We Are Anonymous*,” <http://anonhq.com/be-anonymous/>, doi: 2015-08-03T23:55:14+0.00, viewed on 18 May 2015

³¹¹ One should be skeptical of any secondary material on Anonymous, given that gathering reliable information on the group is rather difficult. However, *We Are Anonymous* by Parmy Olson provides some insight into what is happening. Parmy Olson, *We Are Anonymous: Inside the Hacker World of LulzSec, Anonymous and the Global Cyber Insurgency*, (London, UK: William Heinemann, 2013) The best source might possibly be the

example of aggression against corporate online resources and other virtual world emanations representing forces Anonymous declared as a danger to society. While it may make logical sense to impair the opposition, it also violates the principle of non-aggression and cooperative effort that is so prominent amongst the libertarian community. Furthermore, the influence Anonymous possessed over society concerning the constituent knowledge of computer programming and the operation of the internet placed these activists in a position of power over others- also a conflict of interest.

Another example would be the instances of anarchist violence during the Oakland occupation, which ultimately ended in a violent confrontation between the police and activists. The anarchist actions at Occupy Oakland included the contradictions that were present in the activism of Anonymous organizations, but it also included a very real element of violence and fear. In a similar way to what happened in Seattle during the WTO protest in 1999, a small group of anarchists took their activism in a divergent manner from standard anarchist principles, which led to the eventual shut down of the occupation.³¹²

After all, the one percent were not the ones out in the street of Oakland the next morning sweeping up the shattered glass or picking up the burned debris. I do think there is a kind of violence in the way property destruction affects others without their consent. A small group of people making decisions that affect the safety and reputation of the whole movement is not what democracy looks like.³¹³

documentary *We Are Legion: The Story of the Hacktivists*. Brian Knappenberger, *We Are Legion: The Story of the Hacktivists*, 30 October 2012

³¹² The Seattle Protests in 1999 were part of the Global Justice Movement “that shut down the World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle . . .” David Graeber, *The Democracy Project: A History, A Crisis, A Movement*, (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2013) pg. 6-7 However, even the reports of violence at this event have been called into question. “When such stories appeared in the *New York Times*, members of the local Direct Action Network, . . ., actually picketed the paper, and it was forced to issue a retraction after calling the Seattle police, who confirmed that they had no evidence any of these tactics had actually been deployed.” David Graeber, *The Democracy Project: A History, A Crisis, A Movement*, (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2013) pg. 132

³¹³ Sunaura Taylor, “Scenes from Occupied Oakland,” *Occupy: Scenes From Occupied America*, ed. Astra Taylor, Keith Gessen, and editors from *n+1*, *Dissent*, *Triple Canopy*, and *The New Inquiry*, (London, UK: Verso, 2011), pg. 142

As a result of these actions, the police used this as an excuse to storm the occupation in Oakland and end the protest- the first occupation to be forcibly shut down by authorities.

Nevertheless, despite the involvement of activists exhibiting behavior that contradicted libertarian positions, the Occupy libertarian community developed further and avoided the paralysis that plagued Occupy progressives. By focusing on working groups to develop their ideas, they were able to avoid the conformity espoused by Occupy progressives and spread their ideas. The individual working groups, whether it was one that specialized in African American rights or the “People’s Kitchen,” provided the perfect venue for each libertarian to file and foster their own concerns and operate independently and free from any centralization. However, despite the actions of anarchists in Oakland and Anonymous, these working groups always acted together in a larger framework that converged around libertarian ideals. As the activist from Occupy Wall Street stated, “The organization is a cooperative effort between a number of people, groups, and other existing organizations that work together under a common cause that is in a constant state of being defined.”³¹⁴

Expanding Past Occupation

By concentrating on working groups as their main forum of activism, the Occupy libertarian community created de-facto separate organizations within the original occupation that raised the question of the continued association with Occupy. The

³¹⁴ Interviewee Occupy 1, Zuccotti Park, New York City, 29 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 80

incompatibility of their solutions with those of Occupy progressives, which Americans ultimately associated with Occupy, was a cause of frustration for libertarians. Furthermore, the impression many Americans possessed of Occupy having no direction or being without purpose did not ameliorate, or even enforced, the impression of foreignness attached to the Occupy libertarian community. This all led to the questioning of the Occupy association, with some libertarians looking to other outlets for their activism.

These differences eventually led to a fundamental disagreement that was exemplified by the events in Occupy New Hampshire. There was an attempt by more progressive elements to modify the decision making procedures, as outlined earlier. One activist from New Hampshire related the event:

It boiled down to- one of the main points of contact was not respecting the process and was trying to do things unilaterally. . . People decided that this was the time to put our foot down and block him from access. There was a huge heated debate over that.³¹⁵

This argument became symbolic of the friction within Occupy organizations across the country, with the issue of the second amendment becoming the breaking point in New Hampshire. It turned “into a giant flame” where “everyone was just acting disrespectful to each other.”³¹⁶ Occupy libertarians who attempted to remain in the group while defending those who wished to still carry guns were banned and rendered unwelcome in Occupy New Hampshire. In response, Occupy libertarians created their own organization called Occupy New England, which ironically outlived Occupy New Hampshire and created an education program for future activists.³¹⁷

³¹⁵ Interviewee Occupy 12, New Hampshire, USA- via Skype, 31 January 2013, Volume II, pg. 201

³¹⁶ Interviewee Occupy 12, New Hampshire, USA- via Skype, 31 January 2013, Volume II, pg. 201

³¹⁷ Occupy New England stated to develop a training program to get people involved in governmental affairs, along with the activism they were already involved with already by training them in the Activist Academy in the summer of 2013. Interviewee Occupy 12 was at the center of the planning and stated, “I am hoping with this fourth regional convergence and the Activism Academy that I am hoping to run, I am going to see them

This divide was also present when attending a meeting at Occupy Wall Street for the S17 anniversary preparations. There was a fear amongst members concerning the possibility of infiltrators present at the meeting that sought to obtain information on S17 event with the intent for sabotage. Therefore, there was a request from a high profile Occupy progressive that those not involved with the event to please leave the meeting during the planning session. This emerged into a huge fight on whether this should be carried out or not, with activist from the libertarian community interviewed for this dissertation blocking this motion. Eventually, those not involved in the event were allowed to stay, except of reporter from the L.A. Times. However, it demonstrated that even on practical and pragmatic matters there was a divide in how each faction viewed the organizing agent.

Independent of this friction between the two strands, the Occupy libertarian community was also feeling that some important issues were not being addressed. While Occupy libertarians initially had difficulties in communicating their ideology to Americans before Zuccotti Park, their experience in Occupy only increased that difficulty. One activist from Iowa expressed the following:

Absolutely. When the energy was at the level when the movement first started it wasn't terribly hard. There were a lot of misconceptions, a lot people saying they represented the group's ideas when they didn't. Now, it's extremely difficult.³¹⁸

Furthermore, Occupy later attracted activists accustomed to the professional-style of non-governmental organizations that had a small active hierarchy and a large passive membership, which further obscured the message concerning citizen ownership over the

start participating in their local governments and start actually getting into positions where they can make changes within the system and have those people still get out and rabble rouse." Interviewee Occupy 12, New Hampshire, USA- via Skype, 31 January 2013, Volume II, pg. 205

³¹⁸ Interviewee Occupy 8, Dubuque, Iowa- via Skype, 7 January 2013, Volume II, pg. 166

political process. New joiners would “say Occupy Wall Street is great, but they don’t understand they have to go in and make the fight, that they have to put the sweat in to build on it. It isn’t just going to be handed to them.” The activists at the foundation of Occupy noticed new activists wanted “to click a button, . . .to come out to a rally once, and then [say] you guys go off and make it happen.”³¹⁹ The Occupy libertarian message was becoming lost and it became harder for libertarians to find new joiners who didn’t fully understand what it meant to be a community libertarian activist.

While Americans were now aware that other libertarians existed apart from Objectivists and the followers of Ayn Rand, the history of community libertarians was still only superficially being absorbed.³²⁰ Noam Chomsky did bring certain awareness to the public concerning the role of libertarian socialism, cooperative movements, and other community-centered forms of activism independent of the state in American history.³²¹ However, despite his popularity and talks at Occupy concerning this history, most of the public was unaware of the cooperative movements highlighted in John Curl’s book *For All The People: Uncovering the Hidden History of Cooperation, Cooperative Movements, and Communalism in America*. They were also unaware of the example displayed by the

³¹⁹ Interviewee Occupy 1, Zuccotti Park, New York City, 29 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 83

³²⁰ Objectivism is the philosophy that originates from *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand and outlined further by works like *The Virtue of Selfishness*. “The Objectivist ethics holds man’s life as the standard of value- and his own life as the ethical purpose of every individual man. . . Value is that which one acts to gain and/or keep- virtue is the act by which one gains and/or keeps it. The three cardinal values of the Objectivist ethics- the three values which, together, are the means to and the realization of one’s ultimate value, one’s own value life- are: Reason, Purpose, Self-Esteem, with their three corresponding virtues: Rationality, Productiveness, Pride.” Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, (London, UK: Signet Book, 1961,pg. 27; Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*, (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1957)

³²¹ “You go back to nineteenth century America, the mill towns around here, the workers were saying, factory girls as they called them, young women from the farms or local craftsmen, ‘the mills ought to be owned and run by the workers in them.’ It’s just natural. It’s like saying ‘People should vote for their own representatives in Congress.’ Well, yeah, those natural ideas are crushed, but there’s no reason why they can’t be realized and implemented.” Workplace Democracy, “Noam Chomsky on the Mondragon cooperatives and Workers’ Councils,” *YouTube*, published on 15 March 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9sV6peQgUK>, viewed 3 August 2015

Populist Movement and its cooperative efforts, its desire to create an independent monetary system based on shared ownership of money, and their alliance with organized labor. Community libertarians did have as much of a rich history as individual libertarians and it was important to them that Americans understood that. With the failure of communicating this message, along with getting their main points about their activism out, Occupy libertarians became weary of their association with the organizing agent.

Coupled with the inability to communicate with the public concerning their activism, Occupy libertarians were also unable to initiate the alternative structures they desired. The occupations also failed to produce the “refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the existing political institutions,” or any “willingness to challenge the fundamental premises of our economic system.”³²² Occupy only achieved the initial goal of presenting the idea of challenging the status quo with minor examples like the free kitchens established at the encampments or the libraries that allowed activists to explore these ideas. Occupy Sandy did represent one major accomplishment, but it proved to be an isolated event. When an Occupy activist expressed, “I’m a critic. I’ve been here nine months. Maybe I’m not looking outside the bubble of OWS, but I don’t think we’ve done much. That’s just my perspective,” he was displaying a frustration over this lack of progress.³²³ By 30 January 2012, after the last occupations had been closed down across the country, any capability to build alternative structures under the guise of Occupy severely diminished.

The final concern not being addressed seriously enough for Occupy libertarians, and was an important issue in particular for left libertarians, was free market economics. These

³²² David Graeber, *The Democracy Project: A History, A Crisis, A Movement*, (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2013)pg. 98

³²³ Interviewee Occupy 3, Judson Memorial Church Washington Square Park, New York, 03 September 2012, Volume II, pg. 118

libertarians largely agreed with the approaches to economics that many Americans identified libertarianism with in the United States.³²⁴ One example was the activist from Iowa who stated, “I am kind of a free market sort of person. I know some people in Occupy are kind of confused... Like I said earlier, my main thing is against the corruption that creates economic instability.”³²⁵ This position was encapsulated with the following passage: “Commerce under capitalism does have many of the exploitative and alienating features that critics on the left accuse ‘private enterprise’ or ‘market society’ of having. But not because of the enterprise, or because of the market.”³²⁶ Charles Johnson, a market anarchist, described how “much of the ‘progressive’ regulatory structure, supposedly aimed at curbing big business has mainly served to cartelize big business, and to create large fixed costs which tend to drive out potential competitors.”³²⁷ These positions were rarely, if ever, publicized or discussed at General Assemblies or through the media, leaving this particular point of activism relatively unaddressed.

Therefore, PorcFest offered an alternative for some Occupy libertarians willing to explore uncharted territory with regards to their activism. PorcFest was originally an individual libertarian event, which appealed more to Tea Party libertarian activists. However, there has always been a contingent of other libertarians seeking to diversify the festival, with the Alt-Expo that was introduced before being one example. After the closure

³²⁴ A passage from *Markets not Capitalism* summarizes this position quite well. “But left-wing market anarchists are also radically anticapitalistic, and they absolutely reject the belief-common to both the anti-market Left and the pro-capitalist Right- that these five features of the market form must entail a social order of bosses, landlords, centralized corporations, class exploitation, cut-throat business dealings, immiserated workers, structural poverty, or large-scale economic inequality.” Gary Chartier and Charles W. Johnson, *Markets, Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, (London, UK: Minor Compositions), pgs 2-3

³²⁵ Interviewee Occupy 8, via Skype, 14 February 2013, Volume II, pg. 169

³²⁶ Charles Johnson, “Markets Freed from Capitalism,” *Markets, Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, (London, UK: Minor Compositions), pg. 61

³²⁷ Charles Johnson, “Markets Freed from Capitalism,” *Markets, Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, (London, UK: Minor Compositions), pg. 74

of the occupations, libertarians that were present began to attend the PorcFest. Ironically, it was at a festival originally populated by a vast majority of libertarians that would normally associate with the Tea Party that Occupy libertarians found an environment more open to their proposals and ideals. Furthermore, it would seem that more of the Occupy libertarian community prefers to associate with these activists at libertarian festivals as opposed to the traditional “left” of the contemporary American political spectrum.

The fracturing of Occupy New Hampshire into two separate organizations and the association with PorcFest then becomes easier to understand when realizing the differences between the two distinct strands in the Occupy phenomenon. The popular image of Occupy as a collection of students looking to government to regulate society and solve their problems was only a superficial assessment. Furthermore, the notion of Occupy as a movement defined by Occupy Wall Street was never a reality. Each organization represented the desires, needs, and injuries of the constituent activists, with Occupy Wall Street being only one example of many across the nation. However, despite the autonomy that each occupation and post-occupation organization enjoyed, patterns emerged in activist ideologies with two focal poles acting as pillars for activists to gather around. Progressivism and libertarianism created a dichotomy in many Occupy organizations that helped organize like-minded activists in coordinating their activities. With the increased paralysis in the general assembly and the closure of all occupations, Occupy libertarians also started to move their activism into new realms, such as Porcfest.

Chapter 4

Bridging the Rift Within Libertarianism via the Tea Party and Occupy

These examples within the Tea Party and Occupy of a new blossoming form of libertarian activism have challenged the conception of the both as purely conservative or progressive organizations respectively. They also demonstrate that this very libertarian activism has been divided in the United States into two distinct factions: one that appeared allied with the Tea Party and the other with Occupy. This coincided with the natural viewpoints Americans possessed concerning the Tea Party and Occupy as polar opposites incapable of finding a common ground. The positions of libertarians in both the Tea Party and Occupy on private property seem so contradictory that it almost defies belief that they could both adhere to a common ideology, never mind be considered ideological siblings. Indeed, the recognition of Noam Chomsky as a “leftist,” while excusable considering his past affiliation with the New Left in the United States, is exemplary of the inability of most Americans to reconcile this divide. Therefore, even if the Tea Party and Occupy may not be completely conservative or progressive, the divide that appeared amongst factions in either still reinforced the impression of polarity, and thereby partisanship, amongst affiliated organizations.

However, an Occupy activist described one sub-philosophy of libertarianism prevalent at the Alt-Expo at PorcFest 2013 that inspired him and simultaneously provides new insight into this new libertarian activism, the Tea Party, and Occupy:

I was introduced to something called market anarchism. And the way I came to this, I work with people in Occupy who come from Ron Paul, early Tea Party, libertarian backgrounds, which if you watch the media, that doesn't make any sense. The narrative is that the Tea Party is here and the Occupy movement is here. But, the libertarian principle of open free markets I think is a sound one.³²⁸

While this may not be a completely aberrant statement for an activist in Occupy, he was further supported by the Tea Party activist from the Staten Island Tea Party, who was actually present at PorcFest. He explained that:

I'm pretty disappointed in the Tea Party movement because they started out, you know-. . . They go to a rally for an hour and wave signs and flags and then it's over until November. I got really excited when Occupy popped up. And I started Occupy the Fed, which was a kind of a sub-working group of Occupy, to educate people- you know, obviously Occupy is more of a "leftist" movement and we thought it was important to not shun them, or ignore them, or just be critical of them.³²⁹

Indeed, these comments from libertarian activists in the Tea Party and Occupy in New York reveal that the perceived opposing duality between the two appears not to be a complete assessment of libertarian activism within both.

While there are many participants in both that are involved in traditional political organizations and adhere to partisan divides, the Tea Party and Occupy are ultimately organizing agents for Americans to protest against the abuse of power that originated from libertarian activists as outlined in the previous two chapters. In conjunction, with the explosion of popularity and exposure that the Tea Party and Occupy received, a greater heterogeneity in participants emerged. This meant that while libertarian ideology soon became a minority in each, libertarians also had an increased potential for spreading libertarianism to new adherents. Furthermore, it provided an opportunity for the ideology itself to grow and develop by incorporating new ideas and creating new alliances. Given that the Tea Party and Occupy were largely seen by libertarians as recruiting tools to enlist

³²⁸ Interviewee Occupy, Zuccotti Park, New York City, 29 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 81

³²⁹ Interviewee Tea Party 1, Vietnam Veterans Plaza, New York City, 30 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 3

more activists, their approach was arguably a success and initiated a new evolution, especially when concerning the comments above. As a result, libertarians, with their unique position on the political spectrum, could act as a bridge across the partisan divide and bring about a common ground between the Tea Party and Occupy, which sometimes led to open cooperation.

Yet the greater significance of these opening quotes is the discovery that the brands of libertarianism in the Tea Party and Occupy were not diametrically opposed from each other and were in fact interrelated in a larger libertarian movement. After the 2010 elections had largely established the impression of the Tea Party as a conservative element in American society, the Tea Party libertarian coalition eventually experimented with Occupy organizations to revitalize their activism. While these activists found the progressive-dominated General Assemblies unwelcoming, the various libertarian working groups that existed apart from the assemblies proved to be a surprisingly welcome alternative. As a result, this cross-libertarian cooperation provided a foundation for cross Tea Party and Occupy cooperation that demonstrated that they were not necessarily polar opposites. Moreover, it was in those specific working groups that the Tea Party libertarian coalition discovered like-minded activists that envisioned a common future for the United States, even if they argued over the various causes of societal problems. As a result, Occupy acted as an incubator for a new unified libertarian activism that decoupled the historical associations with conservatism and progressivism and enabled more independence for participating activists in what they advocated.

The Unrealized Tea Party-Occupy Link

While an overwhelming amount of Americans view the Tea Party and Occupy as polar opposites, this does not preclude the occasional voice to emerge that contemplates their cooperation, as in the American press:

No doubt, melding together a motley crew of guitar-strumming hippies and tight-pursed Tea Partiers certainly seems far-fetched. But nothing creates change like the power of imagination. Few imagined Occupy Wall Street, with its ramshackle construction and squishy demands, would even come about and then grow this strong.³³⁰

Actually, while it may seem surprising, instances of cooperation between the Tea Party and Occupy have been well documented by Evelyn Messinger, a print and TV journalist, on the Pinterest page entitled “The Tea Party Occupy Connection Chronicle.”³³¹ This website has posted articles, website links, and other sources that document communication between the Tea Party and Occupy as a starting point, with other examples displaying much more. In realizing that this information was not widely known, Messinger noticed that “because it was unusual, the news hook was they weren’t fighting” on the local level. However, “when you get to a large scale media outlet, them not fighting wasn’t interesting- them fighting was interesting.”³³² While local media outlets picked up on these instances, their audience largely consisted of the people participating in the process, which meant that the information was largely contained. Meanwhile, the major outlets that had larger audiences ignored the instances of cooperation because they were looking for a friction that would

³³⁰ Roya Wolverson, “Could Occupy Wall St. and the Tea Party Unite?” *Time*, published on 13 October 2011, <http://business.time.com/2011/10/13/could-occupy-wall-st-and-the-tea-party-unite/>, viewed on 29 November 2013

³³¹ Evelyn Messinger, “The Tea Party Occupy Connection Chronicle,” last updated 16 July 2012, <https://www.pinterest.com/evelynmessinger/the-tea-party-occupy-connection-chronicle/>, viewed on 19 September 2012. This website lists instances of cooperation, communication, and crossover of ideas. What is striking is the amount of local reports listed, really raising doubts over the mass media coverage of the Tea Party and Occupy. There are fifty one reports from across the country relating some level of interaction between both.

³³² Interviewee Independent 1, California, USA via Skype, 10 October 2012, Volume II, pg. 219

simulate the eventual election in 2012, as many expected that there would “be more people on the extremes that are more unwilling to compromise. That is how people are getting elected now.”³³³

The Whitman Institute, which Evelyn Messinger was also writing for, documented as well how the “conservative” Tea Party and “progressive” Occupy shared concerns that would allow for collaboration in bringing change.³³⁴ Published on the Institute’s blog was an account of the frustration with the media in how they portrayed the two.

“A sadder example, in which the news process defeated dialogue but very little was learned, appeared on the NPR program, “Tell Me More.” Ironically, the segment is titled, “Tea Party and Occupy: Can’t They All Get Along?” Well, no – because the reporter won’t let them! Although the segment included the respected facilitator Richard Harwood, who was apparently shanghaied into participating, the host Michel Martin cut him off as Harwood asked his very first question! Apparently she was just too eager to get to the disagreement part to bother with fuddy-duddy facilitation. The Tea Party and Occupy guests obliged, and the result was a predictable battle.”³³⁵

³³³ Interviewee Independent 1, California, USA via Skype, 10 October 2012, Volume II, pg. 219 A CNN report stated the following: “The Tea Party movement was successful in turning a loose group of conservatives angry at Washington into votes at the ballot box. The challenge on the left is can they do the same with Occupy Wall Street?” ProgressiveTVvideo, “CNN: could OWS be just as galvanizing as the tea party?” *YouTube*, published on 27 October 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yiq73QKAvS0>, viewed on the 07 February 2012. While CNN was relatively mild in playing the opposing natures of both, FoxNews was much more heavy handed: “The Tea Partiers want less government, OWS wants more. The Tea Party believes in the Constitution, the organizers of OWS want to change things. They don’t like our system. They want to dismantle it. They’re organized by AdBusters. And the Tea Parties don’t rob each other at night, OWS does. . .” “On Fox News, Tea Party Good, Occupy Wall Street Bad,” *YouTube*, published on 20 October 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vywefaoF22M>, viewed on 07 February 2013

³³⁴ Evelyn Messinger, “TPOWS: Media as Mediation,” *The Whitman Institute*, published on 25 January 2012, <http://thewhitmaninstituteblog.blogspot.com/2012/01/tpows-media-as-mediation.html>, viewed on 7 February 2013 The blog posted was also by the creator of the Pinterest page “The Tea Party Occupy Connection Chronicle.” The Institute is interested in creating dialogue and help non-profits and other organizations overcome any disagreements or challenges. Fred Whitman “founded the Whitman Institute as a small, operating foundation to explore how to help people improve their everyday problem solving and decision-making. His core question was how the interplay of thinking and feeling affects our choice, actions and relationships. What underpinned this question was a search for answers to come to terms with his own painful past: a past that included mental illness and suicides in his immediate family, as well as a lifetime of instances where he felt irrationality and closed-mindedness ruled the day (as is not uncommon, he was better at seeing those traits in others than in himself).” “Our Story,” *The Whitman Institute*, <http://thewhitmaninstitute.org/about/our-story/>, viewed on 7 February 2013

³³⁵ Evelyn Messinger, “TPOWS: Media as Mediation,” *The Whitman Institute*, published on 25 January 2012, <http://thewhitmaninstituteblog.blogspot.com/2012/01/tpows-media-as-mediation.html>, viewed on 07 February 2013

The Whitman Institute visualized this cooperation through a Venn Diagram, which took two ovals, one describing the Tea Party and the other describing Occupy, and had them overlap at points that both were normally associated with and carried the potential for both to work together.³³⁶ Inside that overlap, the joint positions were described as being against “large corporations lobby for the government to have more power, and in return the government enacts laws and regulations favourable to large corporations.”³³⁷ After outlining the positions of the Tea Party libertarian coalition and the Occupy libertarian community, it should be evident that this overlap summarizes many libertarian positions.

However, this common ground ultimately could not be established because of their differing party affiliations. As Tea Party conservatives were already invested in the Republican Party since the 2010 election and Occupy progressives were eyeing a similar alliance with Democrats like Elizabeth Warren, this positioned each in the commonly perceived conception: the Tea Party as a radical wing of the Republican Party and Occupy as the equivalent of the Democratic Party. What made the limited cooperation captured on this Pinterest page possible and the capability of overcoming the partisanship was the involvement of libertarians, as a result of their unique position in contemporary politics. Indeed, in a Fox debate concerning both the Tea Party and Occupy, there was one participant who even seemed to acknowledge a libertarian link, but was denied to expand further by the rest of the panel who believed in the divide.

³³⁶ Julia La Roche, “The Tea Party-Occupy Wall Street Venn Diagram” *Business Insider*, published on 14 October 2011, <http://www.businessinsider.com/tea-party-and-occupy-wall-street-2011-10?IR=T>, viewed on 18 May 2015

³³⁷ Evelyn Messinger, “TPOWS: Media as Mediation,” *The Whitman Institute*, published on 25 January 2012, <http://thewhitmaninstituteblog.blogspot.com/2012/01/tpows-media-as-mediation.html>, viewed on 07 February 2013

One example of how libertarians were allowing dialogue and the cooperation to exist between the Tea Party and Occupy is the Facebook group “Liberty Movement/Occupy Wall Street/Tea Party Discussion Group.”³³⁸ This group allows activists from the Tea Party and Occupy to converse with libertarian activists on the state of society. The conversations included matters like poverty, monetary policy, gun ownership, and other topics that dominate current discourse in libertarian circles, as well as in Tea Party and Occupy organizations based on various constituent ideologies (including progressives and conservatives). One comment posed by an Occupy activist on the 22 October 2013 was the following:

Even if I don't agree with what everyone on this page, [a]t least we are interested and engaged on what is happening, which is more than what most Americans can say. Truth is our system is not working and our country is going to shit because politicians, lobbyists, and bureaucrats are running this country into the ground. I'm sure we can all agree that "we the people" are losing our freedoms and prosperity while a small elite are making a profit. I think the liberty and occupy movements have a similar/common goal, but differ on how we want to achieve it and who we put the blame on. For example "libertarians" put more blame on the government where as "occupy" puts more of the blame on free markets and corporations.³³⁹

What was equally enlightening were the limits in how this group could bring agreement on a common platform and how, consequently, it descended into a partisan argument based on the “left-right” paradigm. One example would be the post from L.aFante that shared a picture stating, “are you a kook nazipacifist commulibertard? (take the republican robot quiz and find out)”³⁴⁰ It was exemplary of how conservative and progressive partisanship

³³⁸“Liberty Movement/ Occupy Wall Street/ Tea Party Discussion Group,” *Facebook*, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/466210866731844/events/> This group was a closed Facebook group (which means you have to be a member to post) and was started by a libertarian activist.

³³⁹Posted by Jim Barber on “Liberty Movement/ Occupy Wall Street/ Tea Party Discussion Group,” *Facebook*, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/466210866731844/events/>, published on 22 October 2013, viewed on 06 February 2015

³⁴⁰ Posted by L.aFante (shared from Republican Robot = ElefanteMecanico), “Liberty Movement/ Occupy Wall Street/ Tea Party Discussion Group,” *Facebook*, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/466210866731844/events/>, published on 16 April 2016, viewed 06 February 2015

established a boundary separating conventional activists from others like libertarians as a result of the search for political advantage.

A more positive and constructive example would be the cooperation between Occupy Medford and Wake Up Grants Pass (Tea Party-esque organization, but more libertarian), both in Oregon, when campaigning against the NDAA (National Defense Authorization Act).³⁴¹ One Occupy activist from Medford visited “quite a bit Wake Up America . . . , who would self-identify as a self-conglomeration of conservatives, Tea Party libertarians, Constitutionlists, Republicans,” which was an “across the board mishmash of demographics from that area.”³⁴² These meetings resulted in both Occupy and Tea Party activists standing together “showing America and showing, you know, the forces that be . . . that we weren’t taken it.”³⁴³ The “forces that be” relates to the different political heritages of activists, as those in Occupy were largely targeting the corporate backers of the bill and those in the Tea Party were targeting the actual politicians passing the law.

These comments were supplemented by a Wake Up Grants Pass activist, a libertarian who spearheaded the cooperation, and re-emphasized the dual approach to contemporary issues.

There are a lot of like-minded people in the Tea Party that I absolutely love. It’s unfortunate that in every movement, there are going to be some bad apples. At the end of the day, I

³⁴¹ The NDAA was a lightning rod for both the Tea Party libertarian coalition and the Occupy libertarian community. The American Civil Liberties Union outlined the law as follows: “The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is a federal law specifying the budget and expenditures of the United States Department of Defense (DOD). Each year’s act also includes other provisions, some related to civil liberties. . . . The New Senate NDAA: Brings Indefinite Detention to the U.S. Itself . . . Bolsters Claims of NDAA and AUMF Indefinite Detention Authority. . . Requires Report on Even More NDAA and AUMF Indefinite Detention Authority. . . Tries to Strip Federal Courts of Ability to Decide Challenges to Harmful Conditions. . . Violates Supreme Court Decision by Stripping Habeas Rights from Detainees Left at Guantánamo . . . Blocks Most Cleared Detainees from Going Home. . . ”NDAA,” *American Civil Liberties Union*, <https://www.aclu.org/blog/tag/ndaa>, viewed on 02 February 2015

³⁴² Interviewee Occupy 4, Oregon, USA via Skype, 26 October 2012, Volume II, pg. 120

³⁴³ Interviewee Occupy 4, Oregon, USA via Skype, 26 October 2012, Volume II, pg. 125

signed on with a lot of the ideals that are behind Occupy and, obviously, the Tea Party. I'm part of the Tea Party, but I consider myself part of the Occupy movement too today. Big business, big banks, you know, there is a reason for all of us to connect because our liberties are at stake, or what's left of our liberties.³⁴⁴

This organization was more of an occurrence in the earlier history of the Tea Party, when it was not so recognized as a conservative "movement." However, the fact that this activist, in essence the leader of the group, was a libertarian allowed for a more non-partisan outlook that could lead to unconventional possibilities. Evelyn Messinger highlighted how important he was to the cooperation that existed on both sides. "He's the one who really believes in reaching across even though he is very committed to his conservative ideals. He's a big- both he and Ron- are big Ron Paul supporters. But Joe would be the one most likely to be willing to talk to you."³⁴⁵ It was an example of the cooperation between both that was made possible by libertarian involvement, as it was not electoral victories that libertarians were seeking, but the advancement of their ideals.

The reason why political gain in elections was not a goal of the Tea Party libertarian coalition or the Occupy libertarian community was related to their existence on an alternate political spectrum from the ones occupied by conservatives and progressives. As a result, they were and are not inhibited by the polarization found within the left-right paradigm and were able to form a cross-coalition in both the Tea Party and Occupy that made it possible for others to meet and find common ground for discussion. Libertarians of all backgrounds could easily identify with progressives on social issues and personal freedoms, while the notions of constraining government and permitting economic freedom made working with conservatives equally possible.³⁴⁶ Messinger herself stated, "The people who crossed over

³⁴⁴ Interviewee Tea Party 3, Oregon, USA via Skype, 1 November 2012, Volume II, pg. 46

³⁴⁵ Interviewee Independent 1, California, USA- via Skype, on 10 October 2012, Volume II, pg 216

³⁴⁶ Jason Brennan outlines the connections that libertarians with conservatives and progressives, though with limitations. "American conservatives often claim to be skeptical of governmental power. They worry that

and were willing to talk to the other side probably had more in common with the people they were talking to on the other side than with the rest of their movement. . . The emergence of Ron Paul is pretty significant because he is a figure that crosses over to these two, that big boundary.”³⁴⁷ Congressman Paul was just one example of the possibilities that libertarians could bring to Tea Party-Occupy cooperation.

The Ron Paul Campaign in 2008 and 2012 actually represented the most visual and was probably the most influential form of libertarian activism in American society. While this may not be a comment on the merit of the campaign, it did demonstrate that libertarianism was growing in influence and, more importantly, appeal. The attraction Ron Paul held for conservatives should come as no surprise, given that the campaign had a strong influence in the Tea Party alongside conservatives. However, for many seasoned libertarians, it was an opportunity to convert conservatives away from the likes of Sarah Palin and Glenn Beck. This did not include a goal to take the Republican Party for themselves, as one activist stated:

Well, like other Ron Paul groups all over the country. The Libertarian Party, libertarian groups. We were just in Tampa. I MCed the Ron Paul fest. It was a grassroots event. In one sense, celebrating Ron Paul’s legacy, career and in another sense thanking god that he is finally retiring. A lot of feel that Ron Paul, as much as he was able to spread the message and he absolutely was, at the same time he was leading people into a sort of false paradigm,

when government tries to solve problems, it often makes things worse rather than better. Conservatives often claim to favor free markets, less extensive government management and regulation of the economy, and strong respect for property rights. On these matters, libertarians and conservatives agree.” Jason Brennan, *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) pg. 13 He then stated, “Liberals regard liberty as the fundamental value by which to guide politics. They regard respect for liberty as the primary constraint on political action. A person is liberal to the extent she is committed to respecting and promoting personal freedom. In this sense, yes, all libertarians are liberal.” Jason Brennan, *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) pg. 16 The limitations are established in the following statements: “Libertarianism is not a right-wing or conservative view. Libertarians and certain conservatives share some political beliefs, but they are opposed on many other.” Jason Brennan, *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) pg. 13 “In philosophical liberalism, there is a divide between ‘left-liberals’ and libertarians. This divide is over the issue of economic liberty.” Jason Brennan, *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) pg. 18

³⁴⁷ Interviewee Independent 1, California, U.S.A. via Skype, 10 October 2012, Volume II, pg. 220

however you want to describe it, where people were getting involved in the Republican Party thinking that that was going to change something. "Register Republican so we can vote Ron Paul in the primary. Let's take back the Republican Party." Bottom line: you can take back- you can all become involved in the Republican Party, but until you're the wealth of the Koch Brothers or George Soros, you're not going to do anything. You're not going to change the corporation that is the Republican Party. So that is a little frustrating, that even people in the Liberty Movement fall for this shit and get distracted.³⁴⁸

More importantly, Ron Paul had influence amongst progressives and other liberals that also included activists in Occupy concerning his stances on "crony capitalism" and foreign interventions. Ralph Nader stated on FoxNews when asked why he thought Tea Party Republicans were different:

To the extent that they are true libertarian conservatives, not corporatists. Corporatists believe in corporate government. They [libertarians] are great allies with many liberals and progressives to challenge the bloated wasteful military budget, to challenge undeclared wars overseas, to challenge hundreds of billions of dollars in corporate welfare.³⁴⁹

The fact that this quote existed, let alone that it was aired on FoxNews, further illustrates the pull the Ron Paul Campaigns had on Americans and the power of libertarian propaganda.

While Ron Paul represented the individualistic libertarian strand, community libertarians also exuded an influence from an inverse position, with Noam Chomsky leading the growth. Chomsky was a leading advocate for Occupy and spoke at occupations in solidarity with what was being attempted, which eventually went on to become a book called *Occupy*. What is not so well known is that Chomsky even spoke in favor of the Tea Party protests, stating, "A lot of what they are protesting is pretty sensible. A lot of the protests are for example against the bailout. The massive bailout. They feel that they were

³⁴⁸ Interviewee Tea Party 1, Vietnam Veterans Plaza, New York City, on 30 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 17

³⁴⁹ evelkidnievel, "Ron Paul-Ralph Nader agree on 'Progressive-Libertarian Alliance,'" *YouTube*, published on 17 December 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTCr3dtDv1o>, viewed on 19 May 2013

betrayed.”³⁵⁰ While it was accompanied with a warning that these activists were being taken advantage of by the Republican Party and corporate interests, even Chomsky’s own message was beginning to resonate with Tea Party activists who were now aware of the possible commonality they may have, as did progressives. Some of Chomsky’s stances concerning president Obama have also made him more palatable to those involved in the Tea Party. One Tea Party activist interviewed on the project stated that he wasn’t a huge fan,” although they admitted to not being too familiar with him, but he like some of his work particularly on the media.³⁵¹ While this may not have had the same impact as the Ron Paul campaign, the community libertarian involvement was having a crossover effect as well.

While Oregon represented the possibilities libertarians could bring in cooperating with conservative and progressives, there were also examples of pan-libertarian cooperation that yield more impressive results. One prominent example was the cooperation witnessed between Occupy Dubuque/Cedar Rapids and the Dubuque/Cedar Rapids Tea Party.³⁵² In Dubuque, Iowa, libertarians were instrumental in bringing together Tea Party and Occupy activists in protesting the application of red-light cameras because of the loss of privacy involved. Iowa was a rather particular case in that libertarians tended to be the majority in both the Tea Party and Occupy. During the 2012 Republican Primaries, “Iowa’s delegation at the Republican National Convention cast 22 of its 28 votes for Ron Paul- nearly 79 percent of the delegation.” This unique environment created the ability for

³⁵⁰ Pegelatin, “Noam Chomsky on right wing Tea Party protest, ‘People with real grievance,’” *YouTube*, published on 3 November 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2zYaKXeyXE>, viewed the 4 February 2013

³⁵¹ Interviewee Tea Party 1, Vietnam Veterans Plaza, New York City, 30 August 2012

³⁵² The author of the Tea Party Occupy Connection Chronicle had heard about this example of cooperation as well. They stated in response to hearing about the instance in Iowa and the state congressman working in town meetings on their behalf, “He was partly Libertarian right? Ron Paul person?” Interviewee Independent 1, Oregon, USA via Skype, 10 October 2012, Volume II, pg. 211

activists operating within both organizing agents to find common ground, sometimes to the surprise of outsiders. When asked about the red-light camera issue, an Occupy activist related that, “We decided to pursue the issue with the Tea Party. . . Then we went to the city council. . . They thought it was just the Tea Party. Then they talked to people like me and they went, ‘Oh wait- Occupy?’”³⁵³

This developed further, with even a candidate from Dubuque for the state legislature supported by libertarians in both Occupy and the Tea Party from Dubuque stating, “It was a big signal. So, that is one of the reasons why the city council voted 7-0 to table indefinitely automated traffic enforcement. . . It was becoming a populism issue.”³⁵⁴ There was even discussion to launch a joint Tea Party and Occupy CPAC to promote these libertarian values. This was made possible because of the relative fluidity that existed between the Tea Party, Occupy, and the Liberty Movement (libertarian and Ron Paul activists) concerning membership, each with a high level of libertarian participation.

Another interesting convergence occurred in Minnesota where a Ron Paul supporter in the Tea Party, a community libertarian in Occupy, and an activist associated with the Republican Party entered into an organized debate. The Tea Party activist expressed, “Oh my God, I never hear ‘liberals’ speak about the Constitution, and I agree with everything you just said.”³⁵⁵ The Occupy community libertarian stated in response, “I pointed out . . . that my views are, in fact, very common but people who think like myself are never given space

³⁵³ Interviewee Occupy 9, Dubuque, Iowa via Skype, 7 January 2013, Volume II, pg. 173

³⁵⁴ WeAreChange, “Occupy Wall Street and The Tea Party Come Together in Iowa Against Big Brother - YouTube,” *YouTube*, published on 14 August 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UdNAOoCX-M>, 1 December 2014

³⁵⁵ Michael Cavlan, “Occupy and Tea Party Members Meet in Minnesota,” *Dissident Voice*, 28 April 2012, <http://dissidentvoice.org/2012/04/occupy-and-tea-party-members-meet-in-minnesota/>, viewed on 22 January 2014

on the 'progressive' media like MSNBC.”³⁵⁶ After the Republican activist tried to win back support from the Tea Party libertarian, they were met with the following response, “Oh, hell no! I am done with this lesser evil nonsense. I am so done with that!” This event in Minnesota was exemplary of what was occurring across the country: libertarians in both the Tea Party and Occupy recognizing that they had more in common with each other than with activists in their current organizing agents.

The cooperation experienced by the Tea Party libertarian coalition with the Occupy libertarian community represented part of a broader unifying process, bringing libertarians together after decades of existing divided. The Occupy community libertarian from Occupy Wall Street quoted at the beginning of this chapter expressed this very sentiment in stating, “I think that Occupy, the Tea Party, the libertarians, the radical left, and the Freedom Movements are just so close together that the idea that Occupy is the [political] counterweight of the Tea Party. . . is absurd. The Democrats and Republicans are right here, next to each other and we’re way over here, next to each other.”³⁵⁷ In essence, the Tea Party and Occupy have provided the ground for a new libertarian movement to develop that would include the likes of Ron Paul activists working alongside Noam Chomsky supporters.

Comments from Ron Paul and Noam Chomsky on US political culture also provided Tea Party and Occupy libertarians with a rhetorical framework to their shared positions concerning policies and criticisms of current and past administrations in the American government. Noam Chomsky is quoted in saying, “His [Ron Paul] point was not only accurate, but it is exactly what is explained by Pentagon review panels. . . After 9/11, Bush

³⁵⁶Michael Cavlan, “Occupy and Tea Party Members Meet in Minnesota,” *Dissident Voice*, 28 April 2012, <http://dissidentvoice.org/2012/04/occupy-and-tea-party-members-meet-in-minnesota/>, viewed on 22 January 2014

³⁵⁷ Interviewee Occupy 1, Zuccotti Park, New York City, 29 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 93

made this speech that they hate our freedoms. . . They don't hate our freedoms, they hate our policies."³⁵⁸ Chomsky also was quoted in *On Anarchism*: "This is anarchism [Ron Paul campaign] with corporate funding and misplaced nostalgia, its solidarity cleaved off by the willful protagonists in Ayn Rand's novels. Yet I'm more optimistic than I'm often told I should be about the prospects for and longings of this bloc and of the chances for reuniting it with a libertarianism more worth having."³⁵⁹ As the Tea Party and Occupy grew in popularity and more activists became exposed to libertarian and anarchist philosophies, this alignment in comments between Ron Paul and Noam Chomsky were further recognized by participants.

This alignment was accelerated in the working groups of Occupy organizations across the country, following the electoral success of Tea Party conservatives in 2010 that alienated many Tea Party libertarians. As a result of the decidedly conservative turn within many Tea Party organizations, Occupy offered fresh possibilities for many in the Tea Party libertarian coalition seeking to advance their unique agenda undeterred by conservative goals. Just like the activist from the Staten Island Tea Party, examples of this shift popped-up across the country. Another Tea Party libertarian from Houston stated, "I support their

³⁵⁸ Ken Hildebrandt, "Noam Chomsky in defense of Ron Paul, *YouTube*, published on 24 September 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGcJmbNgbV0>, viewed on 07 February 2013. The comparison of Noam Chomsky and Ron Paul is an apt one for this case, as both were seen as symbolic figureheads for Occupy and the Tea Party respectively. However, that is not to assume that both were in full agreement about everything. Still, they both correspond to what one would expect in a libertarians alliance, as per the following quote by Chomsky: "Anarcho-capitalism, in my opinion, is a doctrinal system which, if ever implemented, would lead to forms of tyranny and oppression that have few counterparts in human history. There isn't the slightest possibility that its (in my view, horrendous) ideas would be implemented, because they would quickly destroy any society that made this colossal error. The idea of 'free contract' between the potentate and his starving subject is a sick joke, perhaps worth some moments in an academic seminar exploring the consequences of (in my view, absurd) ideas, but nowhere else: I should add, however, that I find myself in substantial agreement with people who consider themselves anarcho-capitalists on a whole range of issues; and for some years, was able to write only in their journals. And I also admire their commitment to rationality- which is rare- though I do not think they see the consequences of the doctrines they espouse, or their profound moral failings." "On Anarchism, Noam Chomsky interviewed by Tom Lane," <http://www.chomsky.info/interviews/19961223.htm>, viewed on 30 January 2015

³⁵⁹ Noam Chomsky, *On Anarchism*, (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2013) pg. xiv

[Occupy] right to expression and actually attended early local events to show my solidarity.”³⁶⁰ A counterpart in Occupy Houston also expressed support for they considered the basis of the Tea Party and lamented on the direction it had taken with its cooperation with the Republican Party: “The core of what I learned does indicate that they aligned their desires to the same as Occupy. But unlike Occupy, the Tea Party allowed political influence into their movement and had it a profound effect on their movement.”³⁶¹ These positions were also duplicated in Washington, D.C. with a Tea Party activists claiming about Occupy the following: “I seem them as individuals, not as a group. There are all sorts of people in there, just like the Tea Party. I had a great interview with an Occupy guy.”³⁶² Two Occupy equivalents stated the following about the Tea Party: “[Interviewee 19]They came out of legitimate concerns. Economic concerns. [Interviewee 20] They had a lot of the same economic insecurities that Occupy members had.”³⁶³

This shared commonality and convergence of interest could also be witnessed independent of the above interviews if one focused specifically on what was being advocated from the Occupy sites. One example would be an activist supporting the program of End the Fed and Occupy the Fed (both associated with libertarians normally found in the Tea Party coalition) at Occupy Wall Street stating: “Gold is money, silver is money. Green dollars are not money. They are using inflation as a hidden tax to fuck the people. Prices go up, do your wages go up? No!”³⁶⁴ Even the controversial activist Alex

³⁶⁰ Interviewee Tea Party 4, Houston, Texas via Facebook, 2 January 2013, Volume II, pg. 51

³⁶¹ Interviewee Occupy 6, Houston, Texas via Facebook, 21 December 2012, Volume II, pg. 158

³⁶² Interviewee Tea Party 7, Virginia, USA, via Skype, interviewed on 8 January 2012, Volume II, pg. 74

³⁶³ Interviewees Occupy 10 and 11, Washington, DC, via Skype, interviewed on 14 February 2013, Volume II, pg. 198

³⁶⁴ super16g123, “Occupy Wall Street- Occupy the FED Speech,” *YouTube*, published 7 October 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lng3aOdhcCk>, viewed on 7 February 2013

Jones, as presented in the chapter on the Tea Party Libertarian Community, was present at Occupy Houston also advocating a campaign against the Federal Reserve, expressing:

Look at them! They like to pose with the bald eagle, the symbol of the United States. They like to use the word federal, but this is private property! And they can only operate as long as they bamboozle and fool the public, but the world is waking up and we are going to abolish the private run-for-profit Federal Reserve!³⁶⁵

These are examples of libertarians who were originally active in Ron Paul campaigns, activism for the second amendment, and other Tea Party libertarian positions that were surprising to be found in Occupy if you subscribe to it being a tool of the progressive wing of the Democratic Party.

In conjunction, considering the disdain most libertarians felt towards Occupy progressives, both individual and community libertarians realized and developed a common identity to enable their vision of how community should be structured.³⁶⁶ This common identity was built upon certain common foundations modern libertarians had amongst one another. Ultimately, both sides began to acknowledge and accept what differences did exist as just variations on a similar ideology as opposed to a complete break. Such a newly

³⁶⁵ Mark Rodriguez, "Alex Jones/Occupy Houston OCT 8th 2011 Fed Bank Hou. Tx," *YouTube*, published on 10 October 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kgfu2uebH8>, viewed 16 January 2015. Alex Jones, as mentioned in the chapter on the Tea Party libertarian coalition, was a rather extreme individual libertarian, obsessed with government conspiracies and second amendment rights. The fact that this individual was involved in Occupy Houston should signify the relative diversity of Occupy working groups.

³⁶⁶ Much has been made about the recent alignment between Ron Paul and Ralph Nader, which many signify as a possible new "Progressive-Libertarian" alliance. Judge Napolitano from Fox News stated the following, "Tonight on Freedom Watch, a very special event. Libertarian and Tea Party hero Ron Paul and icon of the left Ralph Nader- think they couldn't disagree? Think again." evelkidnievel, "Ron Paul-Ralph Nader agree on 'Progressive-Libertarian Alliance,'" *YouTube*, published on 17 December 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTCr3dtDv1o>, 19 May 2013. However, this is more indicative of the conversion process many non-libertarians are going through towards libertarianism, with Ralph Nader becoming more and more like a libertarian socialist, such as Noam Chomsky. Libertarians of all varieties have strong, fundamental beliefs that diverge away from progressivism. Jason Brennan stated, "Libertarians have an even stronger commitment to civil rights than left-liberals do, but they do not advocate government control of the economy or an extensive welfare state. So, they cannot be called 'liberals' in this sense." Jason Brennan, *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) pg. 16

developing identity was evident in an experience one anarcho-capitalist had at Occupy Wall Street:

There have been a few anarcho-syndicalists. And they actually really like the idea of voluntarism. They have never heard of it before, but they are very interested in it. . . Basically- I will give you an example [of their activism]. They have a factory and they think that every worker should own that factory. There should be no managers, no bosses, basically everyone controls the factory. I would explain to them that that's fine under a voluntarist society. You can have that.³⁶⁷

Voluntarism is a very strong individual libertarian trait, which means that this individual libertarian accepted the community libertarian approach to managing a cooperative and shared economy for themselves as long as every citizen receives the same treatment for their preferences. In conjunction, cooperation became the keystone of libertarian organization, with even individual libertarians adopting a minimum of collective organization that was common amongst community libertarian organizations.

The Newly Aligned Libertarian Agenda

Therefore, the Tea Party and Occupy initially highlighted that the philosophy of libertarianism had been divided on how various participants conceive the origins of the problems in society today and who was to be held responsible for those problems. One faction saw the corruption of individual rights by state power as the key problem, a typical American point of view. Others concentrated on how individuals form a community and the disruption of that community by organized capital and private power, which has a more foreign association in the United States but has roots nonetheless. The development largely

³⁶⁷ Adam Kokesh, "Anarcho-Capitalism at #OWS," *YouTube*, published on 22 October 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpPoGkwx6OE>, accessed 7 February 2013

mirrored the evolution of the philosophy of libertarianism, with one part developing in the United States and the other in Europe. Both have a common foundation with classical liberalism and the Enlightenment.³⁶⁸ However, the Atlantic acted as a barrier in the evolution of libertarianism, as the American version maintained the individual focus that grew into what Americans perceive as traditional libertarianism. In Europe, the influence of the French Revolution and Marxism brought a more collective approach to libertarianism and was imported to the United States in the late nineteenth century by immigration and merged with an already burgeoning indigenous cooperative movement.³⁶⁹

In fact, despite their common origins in the enlightenment, individual and community libertarians have experienced significant friction in their history concerning the nature of libertarianism and which side justly represents it. Individual libertarians have often criticized community libertarians as either being oxymoronic, not real libertarians, or destructive to the libertarian movement. One individual libertarian stated: “This growing ‘left-libertarian’ crowd represents a malignant cancer to the otherwise noble, rational, and humanitarian liberty movement. Their favorite tools are sophistry and equivocation.”³⁷⁰ Another individual libertarian pointed out why they thought libertarian socialism was

³⁶⁸ “Libertarianism- the movement toward less government- is not, at least according to its best proponents, a conservative reaction to the welfare state and general growth of government, but a liberal or even radical one. Friedrich Hayek, perhaps the foremost philosopher of libertarianism during the twentieth century, summed up differences between conservatism and ‘true liberalism.’” William Ebenstein and Alan Ebenstein, *Great Political Thinkers: Plato to the Present*, (United Kingdom: Wadsworth Group/Thomson Learning, 2000) pg. 814

³⁶⁹ While this integration of the libertarianism from Europe into American society had a huge influence on how community libertarians formulate their positions today, there had been cooperative and collective movements present in American history that predates that integration. As mentioned in the chapter on the Occupy libertarian community, the Populist Movement was largely based on American ideals and yet had developed something akin to what Occupy activists adhere to today. Also, John Curl’s book *For All The People*, also outlines the extensive history of American cooperatives and collective action. What this European influx did do was to translate this into a libertarian ideology, which explains the divide today. The individual libertarians took a more “conservative” approach and resisted the incorporation of the European evolution, while the more “liberal” or the ones more open to change decided to incorporate these ideas.

³⁷⁰ Post on Christopher Chase Rachels Facebook Board, posted on 21 April 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/christopher.rachels/posts/10203776872373211>, viewed on 20 November 2015

oxymoronic: “LibSoc is so bad it’s not even fun to write against online, so I’m done. It’s socialism phrased as something else. Same crap, different name.”³⁷¹ Historically, these libertarians have been defiant against any variant that challenges any sacrifice of private ownership or surrender, even if voluntary, of individual choice in society.

Ironically, community libertarians have levied similar charges against individual libertarians, making the feud between both sides rather like a “gang turf war” with each side trying to lay claim to the title. One libertarian socialist highlighted how libertarian socialists were actually the first to evolve the terminology: “The word ‘libertarian’ was first used in a political sense by French philosopher and anarcho-communist Joseph de Jacques . . . Throughout most of Europe, the word libertarian was used not to describe free market capitalists but instead anti-state anti-capitalists.”³⁷² Another community libertarian stated the following on the contradictions of anarcho-capitalism: “I have a question. How do anarcho-capitalists call themselves anarchists when clearly anarchism is the rejection of capitalism and the state? I mean, how did anarcho-capitalists not notice this tremendous contraction?”³⁷³ These are just an indication of the friction and sometimes animosity that has existed between both factions in their shared history up to the emergence of the Tea Party and Occupy.

However, despite this divide, the Tea Party and Occupy have also highlighted a consensus, even if unnoticed through the twentieth century, which does exist between both factions on how they envision the future in spite of their differing starting points. This

³⁷¹Quinton Figueroa, “Libertarian Socialism Is An Oxymoron and a Complete Failure,” *Slayerment*, published on 1 August 2015, <http://www.slayerment.com/libertarian-socialism-oxymoron-and-complete-failure>, viewed on 20 November 2015

³⁷² Libertarian Socialist Rants, “Libertarian Socialism Is Not An Oxymoron,” *YouTube*, published on 11 April 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PlfKrl6Q_W8, viewed on 1 May 2016

³⁷³ Jason Unruhe, “Anarcho Capitalists are Not Anarchists, they’re Thieves,” *YouTube*, published on 18 January 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQ9gBRZeZ1c>, viewed on 20 November 2015

consensus on basic foundational philosophical points does provide the possibility for a newly coordinated libertarian activism that would enable a balance of interests between the individual and the community. What had prevented this ideological unity is the divide in the United States between “conservative” and “liberal” political identities that have forced libertarians to choose which one most closely aligned with their particular focuses.³⁷⁴ The Tea Party and Occupy have acted as catalysts to change and have transformed how libertarians conduct their activism, perceive themselves and their possibilities for the future.

This transformation involved a reorientation of priorities and goals, which is now directing libertarian activism on a more alternative route than before with consequences regarding their impact on modern politics. This involved a shift away from the cause of the current problems that have always been the focus of libertarian activism, even if it still does provide a motivation for many activists. The new emphasis is more on what they hope to achieve, which leads to a further transformation concerning with whom libertarians choose to associate.³⁷⁵ One example was the following passage concerning Murray Rothbard, a

³⁷⁴ This may at first seem like a puzzling statement, but there is logic behind the division. Individual libertarians, hoping to enact change, could not form a political alliance with Democrats or progressives on the nature of government in the United States. While they did find common ground on personal liberties, the core of individualist libertarian beliefs rests on a limited or even no form of government. The same would be true for community libertarians and Republicans and conservatives. The no government policy did have a commonality in community libertarian theory, but they also believed that government was instituted by those who benefitted from corporatism- i.e. corporate structures and what we would consider today to be capitalists. They therefore chose to align with political affiliations that represented the very core of their belief that ultimately neutered their other beliefs and made their activism impotent. Gary Chartier and Charles W. Johnson in their collection of essays entitled *Markets, Not Anarchism*, highlighted this dilemma. Roderick T. Long, *Markets Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, ed. Gary Chartier & Charles W. Johnson, (London, UK: Minor Compositions) pg. 209-210

³⁷⁵ One example would be the anarcho-capitalist at a Tea Party event. This activist started yelling at the conservatives saying, “Free market anarchy. Let’s actually be logical with our conclusions people. Leftists. Leftists. Leftists. Leftists. Leftists everywhere. Leftists everywhere who want to use the power of the state to fix everything. You guys are just as bad as Obama.” This activist was booed and told to “shut up.” Motorhomediaries, “Anarcho-Capitalist Confronts Leftists at Denver Tea Party,” *YouTube*, published on 17 April 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3QIED2Hr5c4>, viewed 23 March 2014 Another example would be the incident between a progressive and liberal at Occupy Wall Street concerning the majority needed for consensus “‘Scarlett’ believed that the higher threshold [90%] provided a way for the ‘vanguardists’ to protect their anarchist-based values and identity established early in the Movement. ‘Jack’ claimed that the

central figure in how modern libertarianism developed: “‘Anarcho-capitalists’ such as Rothbard and Childs began to question libertarianism’s historical alliance with the Right, and to abandon defenses of big business and actually existing capitalism in favor of a more consistent left-wing market anarchism.”³⁷⁶ Traditional anarchists had abandoned alliances as well and internalized the emerging new alliance accordingly: “Certainly the crisis inflamed the flaws of capitalism, but whereas liberals and progressives consider rampant unemployment, homelessness, and starvation to be unfortunate blemishes on an otherwise just and efficient economic system, anti-capitalists [anarchists] recognize that capitalism is inherently immoral.”³⁷⁷

This expansion also led to an abandonment amongst some activists concerning the associations with the Tea Party and Occupy in exchange for a more independent variety of activism. An individual libertarian activist who had dealings with both the Tea Party and Occupy expressed the following about Occupy: “Tragic. The grievances they espouse tend to be legitimate however the solutions they call for (more government intervention/regulation) will only serve to exacerbate the very issues they are concerned over.”³⁷⁸ He followed this statement with one concerning the Tea Party: “Reducing the size of the state ought not be the goal, but its elimination. We do not try to merely reduce

‘75% [modified consensus rule] made a lot of sense because we had of disrupters . . . who engaged in outside attacks.’ ‘Jack’ also described a young woman approached him after a GA, visibly upset, ‘aggressive and angry’ about the Demands WG’s 75 rule.” Susan Kang, “Demands Belong to the 99%,” *Occupying Political Science*, ed. Emily Welty, Matthew Bolton, Meghana Nayak, and Christopher Malone, (New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013),, pg. 71

³⁷⁶ *Markets Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, ed. Gary Chartier & Charles W. Johnson, (London, UK: Minor Compositions) pg. 6 The other comment would be how traditional anarchists had abandoned alliances as well in stating, “But left-wing market anarchists are also radically anti-capitalist, and they absolutely reject the belief- common to both the anti-market Left and the pro-capitalist Right- that these five features of the market form must entail a social order of bosses, landlords, centralized corporations, class exploitation, cut-throat business dealings, immiserated workers, structural poverty, or large-scale economic inequality.”

³⁷⁷ Mark Bray, *Translating Anarchy: The Anarchism of Occupy Wall Street*, (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2013) pg. 61 Location 1026

³⁷⁸ Interviewee Independent 3, North Carolina, USA, via Facebook, 17 December 2012, Volume II, pg. 234

cancer we try to eliminate it! Besides a small state just precedes a large one, as the revenue created and garnered through a small state will swell the state's coughers."³⁷⁹ Libertarians were largely becoming more independent of established politics and were increasingly acting as a subversive force, attempting to convince other Americans to disassociate with elements that they believe will only aggravate the nation's problems.³⁸⁰

The first new priority or goal to reach consensus amongst libertarians is the notion of voluntary association that is so commonly communicated by all types of libertarians. Individual libertarians focus primarily on voluntarism, or associations between individuals completely free of coercion and force, with a secondary emphasis on cooperation.³⁸¹ An example of this would be a statement from the popular individual libertarian activist Adam Kokesh: "All we have to do is embrace the idea that human relations should be free of force, fraud, and coercion and embrace the non-aggression principle."³⁸² However, free association and cooperation are linked together and largely cannot exist apart, with the focus on voluntarism being largely how they perceive society.

Community libertarians, conversely, place an emphasis on cooperation and collective action, assuming that participants are active through their own free will and not through aggressive coercion.³⁸³ The comment from the activist in the Zeitgeist Movement

³⁷⁹ Interviewee Independent 3, North Carolina, USA, via Facebook, 17 December 2012, Volume II, pg. 234

³⁸⁰ This was documented in Chapters One and Two in how libertarian activists were using the Tea Party and Occupy as a recruiting tool or an introduction towards their ideology.

³⁸¹ The philosophy of voluntarism largely rests on the non-aggression principle. "Obvious the non-aggression principle may be but, when examined it turns out to rest on a certain conception of property-specifically, it rests on the, perhaps initially startling claim that we own ourselves and, as the rightful owners of ourselves, only we can rightfully decide what is to be done by and to our bodies and our minds. George Casey, *Libertarian Anarchy: Against the State*, (London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2012) pg. 41

³⁸² AdamKokesh, "The Greatest Conspiracy," *YouTube*, published on 26 September 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFKtgrchgMQ>, viewed on 17 October 2012

³⁸³ Rudolf Rocker, an anarcho-syndicalist, demonstrates how similar both positions are in stating that common to all traditional anarchists is "the desire to free society of all political and social coercive institutions which stand in the way of the development of a free humanity. In this sense, Mutualism, Collectivism, and

highlighted this sentiment in stating, “Let us burn these leaches off our backs. Let us replace their corrupt systems with better systems that benefit everyone. Let us reclaim the fruits of our productivity. Let us share our prosperity.”³⁸⁴ Yet, as highlighted before, cooperation cannot exist without free association and voluntary action. Therefore, while libertarians approach the subject from different directions, each type of libertarianism essentially is advocating virtually the same position, which is the elimination of coercion and force and the promotion of free association.

The second priority that evolved was the direct involvement of citizens in societal decision making that eschewed the more limited participation of voting for a representative government. After what they perceived as a failure of representative government during the fiscal crisis and the subsequent Great Recession, more and more libertarians departed from the minarchist position, or limited government position, and moved more towards the anarchist position.³⁸⁵ Minarchism represented a political tradition in the United States, with both individual and community libertarians adhering to it in the past, concerning a limited state that is in contrast to the “no-state” position in anarchism. Consequently, libertarians are now becoming the champions of direct citizen participation in political decision making,

Communism are not to be regarded as closed systems permitting no further development, but merely as economic assumptions as to the mean of a safeguarding a free community.” Rucker, Rudolf, *Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice*, (Edinburgh, UK: AK Press, 2004), pg. 9

³⁸⁴ TerraRubicon, “Zeitgeist Movement 2014,” *YouTube*, published on 3 January 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yE6aq_zvuck, viewed 14 August 2014

³⁸⁵ Indeed, Michael J. Oliver, a Randian that has become an anarcho-capitalist, stated “Conservatives and ‘limited government’ advocates who see the State as a defender of freedom, need to measure the concepts that they are comingling.” J. Michael Oliver, *The New Libertarianism: Anarcho-Capitalism*, (UK: Amazon.co.uk, 2013) pg. 103 A more community libertarian opinion would be the quote from Peter Joseph, founder of the Zeitgeist Movement, which stated, “If you go down to the foundation of the state . . . suddenly we went from a hunter-gatherer type or nomadic type of society to fixed cities, . . . suddenly the introduction of the permanent military. You ended up with this sort of corporate approach to economic management defined as the “state,” which invariably generates imbalance and conflict.” TZMOfficialChannel, “The Zeitgeist Movement – Peter Joseph on RT, Feb 10th, 2012: War and the State,” *YouTube*, published on 10 February 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmMrx-yhaIA>, 9 December 2014 While each activist approaches the “problem” from different angles, they both reach similar conclusions of abandoning the state altogether.

whether it be through local town meetings that were emblematic of Tea Party gatherings or the General Assemblies of Occupy. This position also removes the rigid institutions and regulations that operate on regulations that could actually interfere with decision-making, allowing for greater variation and flexibility the political process. In the Houston Tea Party there was “no official membership” because they believed it led “to bias, corruption, and focused agendas.” They just desired a “return to an idea that liberty is a right of all people” and avoid the broad sweeping legislative process that applies to the whole country by bringing the majority of decisions to local communities.³⁸⁶

The third priority involves the option of multiple economic models, which means that citizens are not forced to comply with either free market or other alternative economic models, but can choose the system they wish to embrace as long as it is voluntary. In connection with the principle of voluntarism and cooperation, libertarians espouse that how Americans choose to conduct their business and support their livelihoods are a matter for themselves to decide. Individual libertarians favor the free market model where entrepreneurship and the free flow of money that adheres to voluntary action are the primary means in which people make their livelihoods. Community libertarians favor rather a more shared economy, in which people can co-own property/business or that there is an equal distribution of resources amongst voluntary participants. While these positions may contradict each other, i.e. the free market vs a collective economy, the above mentioned ideas allow for their simultaneous existence as long as participants recognize the right of others to adopt differing systems.³⁸⁷ The activist from Occupy Wall Street in New York

³⁸⁶ Interviewee Tea Party 4, Houston, Texas via Facebook, 2 January 2012, Volume II, pg. 44

³⁸⁷ “In general, anarchists see no contradictions between freedom and equality, but believe that one reinforces the other. Over the last two centuries, they have extended the principle of equality to embrace all humanity. At the same time, their concern with individuality has prevented them from calling for absolute economic

related to these multitude of economies in stating, “These networks of autonomous communities are able to make decisions on their own that don’t need centralized authority, centralized power, and don’t require coercion from a top-down perspective.”³⁸⁸ Libertarians even suggest that there might be situations in which both systems can benefit from their cooperation, in that one method may support the livelihoods of those in differing economic models.

This is an important new priority and deserves further elaboration, specifically on how differing views can be reconciled with regards to economy relating to the definitions of the “free market” and “civil society.” For many libertarians, “it is merely a demonstration of how individualist and collectivist visions can both be served without compromising either’s interests. Markets and egalitarian distribution of property and wealth are not necessarily mutually exclusive.”³⁸⁹ In fact, the community libertarian emphasis on civil society and the individual libertarian emphasis on the free market to resolve problems are in actuality the same approaches under different guises.³⁹⁰ The free market, while an abstract term, essential is a definition for many libertarians of how individuals interact with one other in a fair manner that is free of control. Civil society represents that very same definition for

equality. While advocating the impartial consideration of everyone’s worth and need, they do not insist on equal treatment and equal shares. They would accept John Rawls’ principle in his definition of justice as fairness that each person has ‘an equal right to the most extensive liberty compatible with a like liberty for all,’ although they would add the proviso that any inequalities in a free society would ideally be the result of voluntary agreement. But they go beyond Rawls who believes that citizens of a country do not object to there being different offices of government. Because they adopt a principle of justice that *everyone* has an *equal* claim to a maximum of freedom they reject all political authority as an illegitimate interference with freedom. As [Benjamin] Tucker put it, they seek the ‘greatest amount of liberty compatible with equality of liberty.’” Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, (London, UK: Harper Perennial, 2008) pg. 50

³⁸⁸ Interviewee Occupy 1, Zuccotti Park, New York, NY, 29 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 81

³⁸⁹ Jeremy Wieland, *Markets Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, ed. Gary Chartier & Charles W. Johnson, (London, UK: Minor Compositions) pg. 308

³⁹⁰ This is an emphasis throughout the book *Markets Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*; *Markets Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty*, ed. Gary Chartier & Charles W. Johnson, (London, UK: Minor Compositions)

other libertarians, just with a more collective approach that seeks to create a certain level of equality in opportunity. Therefore, both are trying to achieving similar results by similar methods, but are just defining them with a different terminology.

The final focus on citizen empowerment emerged as a fundamentally new shared libertarian ethos out of the libertarian experience with the Tea Party and Occupy. In advocating the ability and right of citizens to directly decide legislation themselves, libertarians had already adopted an empowering concept for citizens. However, the experience gained by libertarians, many new to the philosophy, through the Tea Party and Occupy provided examples of how people could influence events through individual action via grassroots movements. Furthermore, there was a questioning of the need for elites to organize, guide, and shape their activism on their behalf because of the belief that other citizens were not capable of determining these actions. Moreover, the growing shift away from minarchism towards anarchism places the right and responsibility for society completely onto citizens themselves. This was evident in the following comment:

The grassroots is the most powerful thing, the citizens are the most powerful thing in this country, in our form of government, which is why the media and those crony capitalists work so hard to keep people from being involved and if they do get involved, to get involved in a way that leaves them alone.³⁹¹

It was a fundamental change in libertarian activism that shifted away from the concepts developed by the Cato Institute or MoveOn.org towards a new grassroots version of libertarianism characterized by activists themselves.

³⁹¹ Interviewee Tea Party 1, Vietnam Veterans Plaza, New York, NY, 30 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 8

Jeremiahs in the Tea Party and Occupy

The new empowerment felt by libertarians is a derivative of an original American value called the “American Jeremiad,” which has existed throughout American history. Its origins can be traced to the Puritan settlers (work ethic, morality, capitalism, etc.) via Perry Miller and Sacvan Bercovitch, who have attempted to link Puritan thinking to political activism and citizenship. The Puritan interpretation of the doctrine of the covenant was portrayed as a contract between God and man, where each was “bound to respect certain avowed terms.”³⁹² This, at least in principle, placed “man” on equal footing with God, “since God in the covenant” had “condescended to deal with him.”³⁹³ The Puritan jeremiad reinforced this interpretation of the doctrine of the covenant by producing a new definition of citizenry with future implications for governance by evoking “the mythic past not merely to elicit imitation but above all to demand progress.”³⁹⁴ It provided a foundation for “a society that devalued aristocracy, denounced beggary, and opened up political, educational, and commercial opportunities to a relatively broad spectrum of the population.”³⁹⁵ It created a sense of empowerment amongst the American citizenry that is still palpable today amongst the different varieties of libertarians.

The “God-like” image and role assumed by Americans originated from two specific teachings developed by seventeenth century Puritan settlers in New England, which evolved

³⁹² Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness*, (Cambridge, USA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1956) p. 119

³⁹³ Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness*, (Cambridge, USA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1956) p. 81

³⁹⁴ Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad*, (London, UK: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), Kindle Version,, Location 327

³⁹⁵ Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad*, (London, UK: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), Kindle Version, Location 266

into the “American Jeremiad,” that motivated uncelebrated actors in the American Revolution in the first example of American populism. The first principle equated man and God together from a legalistic viewpoint by means of the doctrine of the covenant found within Christianity, which was interpreted as a contract that implied an equality of status between the two “parties.”³⁹⁶ The second principle was a responsibility for progress that evolved from the Puritans’ new jeremiads, which emphasized the “mythic past not merely to elicit imitation but above all to demand progress.”³⁹⁷ Upon coalescing into the American Jeremiad, they became the foundation of a “society that devalued aristocracy, denounced beggary, and opened up political, educational, and commercial opportunities to a relatively broad spectrum of the population.”³⁹⁸ The American Jeremiad then emphasized the individual right to self-determination and responsibility for society. It motivated uncelebrated actors in the American Revolution to take ownership over their society. One example was Ebenezer Mackintosh, a shoemaker in Boston, who led a popular insurrection during the Stamp Act protests under the title of Captain General of the Liberty Tree, a symbol that had “vox populi, vox dei” posed on it.³⁹⁹ It further motivated citizens after the revolution, which prompted Alexis de Tocqueville to state: ““The people reign in the American political world like God over the universe. It is the cause and aim of all things, everything comes from them and everything is absorbed in them.”⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁶ Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness*, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 151-2

³⁹⁷ Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad*, (London, UK: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), Kindle Edition, Location 327

³⁹⁸ To describe this American populism, I have borrowed the term used by Sacvan Bercovitch. Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad*, Location 266

³⁹⁹ The Loyal Nine was a social group associated with the Stamp Act Protests that met regularly to discuss politics. They eventually renamed themselves “Sons of Liberty” and christened the Great Elm Tree in Boston the “Liberty Tree.” Alfred E. Young. “Ebenezer Macintosh,” *Revolutionary Founders*, (New York, NY: First Vintage Books Edition, 2012) p. 17, 22, 25, 31

⁴⁰⁰ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2003) p. 71

The Populist Movement, one of the predecessors of community libertarians today, in their attempts to reaffirm the American Jeremiad in a society that had become unresponsive to democratic processes, initiated an evolution in this “God-like” image with important consequences for contemporary society. The movement emerged from the cooperative efforts of farmers, workers, and fiat money supporters who sought to combat the rampant corruption that emerged between industrialists, financiers, and politicians that severely undermined American democracy. However, the Populist Movement was more than an anti-corruption movement, as Populists “developed a new interpretation of their society and new political institutions to give expressions to these interpretations.”⁴⁰¹

The Populists were exceeding the original republicanism promoted by American revolutionaries by circumventing government to address societal ills through independent institutions that enforced a new mark of ownership on society, with the attempt to create a new independent monetary system through the Texas Exchange as one such example. They were not simply reaffirming the American Jeremiad, but transforming and evolving this motivator of revolutionaries, through various collective and cooperative efforts, into Populism. Clarence N. Ousley espoused the spirit of Populism in the following speech: “If it is true that the voice of the people is the voice of God, I expect during the days of this convention to hear some thunderings from Sinai. For, the Mast is come. From crowded town and spreading plain the people come to protest against the accumulation of avarice, to choke the greed of rapacity and to lay their heavy hands upon the extortions of monopoly. They come not as blind followers of any political faith, nor to serve any partisan

⁴⁰¹ Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: a short history of the agrarian revolt in America*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1978) p. 75

purposes, but as controlling sovereigns in the might of their sovereignty, to exercise their sovereign capacities.”⁴⁰²

The rhetoric and aspirations of grassroots movements were and are still analogous to that of the Populist Movement, indicating that these organizations are indeed the de-facto heirs of Populism. However, grassroots movements provided a fragmented image of the Populist vision along the fault lines of race, social status, political concerns, and other defining characteristics. This fragmentation created a causality loop for citizens to repeat on each occasion they strove to resolve an issue of concern. The progressive rejection of Populism made recreating a new “populist” front virtually impossible, leaving only the possibility of acting on small scales with one or two issues in mind. This prevented large cross sections of the population with similar interests and goals from linking together. Daniel T. Rogers in *Age of Fracture* stated, “But in the last quarter of the century . . . the terms that had once dominated post-World War II intellectual life began to fracture. One heard less about society, history, and power and more about individuals, contingency, and choice.”⁴⁰³

From an analysis of the twentieth century at its close this may appear to be the case, but, if taken from as far back as the initial Populist revolt, this fracturing began shortly after the Populist downfall. Populism was the last attempt to appeal to the citizenry as whole and build a coalition that transcended social class, occupation, ideology, and even race, if only to a limited extent. While grassroots movements possessed the potential to energize and organize individuals around an idea or cause, they were largely ineffective in actually

⁴⁰² Clarence N. Ousley , “Unharmful Wealth,” *The Southern Mercury* (Dallas, Tex.), Vol 7, No. 48, Ed. 1, Thursday, November 29, 1888, p.7, through The Portal to Texas History Website, viewed 7 March 2013, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht185380/m1/7>

⁴⁰³ Daniel T Rogers., *Age of Fracture*, (London, UK: The Belknap Press, 20011), Kindle Version, Location 64-65

bringing about change on their own. As a result, citizens in these grassroots movements turned to political parties to initiate what they sought, but this normally came at the cost of ideas being either watered down or changed to accommodate the interest of the political party acting on behalf of the grassroots movements. Furthermore, political parties, by their very nature, used divisions to gain electoral advantage that resulted in the subsequent increase in polarization as the twentieth century progressed. Therefore, while grassroots movements kept the American Jeremiad from disappearing, the ideal needed a more holistic revival to bring it back to its former pre-eminence.

The tone of this revival is exemplified by statements from individual and community libertarians that strike a strong similarity to the statements made by former Populists over a hundred years ago. The first would be the member from the community libertarian organization called the Zeitgeist Movement who stated, “We are the creators. And when we come together, we have the power to create whatever future we can.”⁴⁰⁴ While community libertarians are a fairly new development in American culture, the Populist Movement acts as a focal point that translates the early communal efforts of Americans, who also were influence by the American Jeremiad, towards what could be considered as community libertarianism today. The other example would be the individual libertarian Adam Kokesh with the comment, “Don’t vote for a politician hoping that they will mold the world in your image. Instead, be the change you wish to see.”⁴⁰⁵ Individual libertarians, with their extensive links to various forms of activism and ideologies in the United States, can trace their American Jeremiad heritage to the likes of Thomas Jefferson, those

⁴⁰⁴ “Zeitgeist Movement 2014- YouTube,” TerraRubicon, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yE6aq_zvuck, viewed 14 August 2014

⁴⁰⁵ “The Greatest Conspiracy- YouTube,” AdamKokesh, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFKtgrchgMQ>, viewed 7 February 2013

individuals at the Liberty Tree, and maybe even the Pilgrims themselves. One interviewee echoed these sentiments with the following answer to what a grassroots campaign is: “It what makes change. It always has and you won’t get anywhere without it.”⁴⁰⁶

One more important note regarding the revival of the American Jeremiad in the Tea Party or Occupy would be that while this may appear as a “secular religion” as a result of the use of language, activists today do not see it this way. When an activist was asked about this topic, they responded, “I don’t think that is anyway connected to reality.”⁴⁰⁷ Another activist stated, “I don’t think that is important. I will leave it open to that people really don’t hold that perspective.”⁴⁰⁸ In fact, you could make the argument that in some cases they are “secular atheists.” This was evident when an activist responded to the question of secular religion as “statism.”⁴⁰⁹

Yet, this was not a pan-libertarian transformation, but rather a development that occurred amongst a majority of activists who had an experience within both the Tea Party and Occupy. The reason behind the importance concerning this involvement is a result of the comradery developed inside the working groups of Occupy organizations and beyond. Working in close proximity to both conservative and progressives seeking to impose their ideologies on others made libertarians more open to the complexities within their own ideology. Libertarians who did not participate in the Tea Party and Occupy were and are more likely to adhere to the divide within libertarianism itself, as experienced at PorcFest. During a talk concerning “Crowd-Sourcing Solutions” held by the Alt-Expo, a member of the crowd adamantly insisted that Occupy was a “leftist” group that sought government control

⁴⁰⁶ Interviewee Occupy 11, Washington, DC, USA, via Skype, 14 February 2013, Volume II, pg. 191

⁴⁰⁷ Interviewee Tea Party 2, Kolbert Park, Brooklyn, New York City, 3 September 2012, Volume II, pg. 26

⁴⁰⁸ Interviewee Occupy 3, Judson Memorial Church, New York City, 3 September 2012, Volume II, pg. 115

⁴⁰⁹ Interviewee Occupy 8, Dubuque, Iowa- via Skype, 7 January 2013, Volume II, pg. 169

on pretty much every aspect of society. While there were members of the audience who spoke up in disagreement and displayed examples in contrast, he refused to accept them even though he himself had never participated in an occupation. It was an example of how important the Tea Party and Occupy had become in the libertarian transformation that was on display at PorcFest. Despite this continuing presence of this divide at PorcFest, this new libertarian activism was also being disseminated to those without the above-mentioned experience through formal and informal presentations.

This libertarian activism also caused a shift in the evolution of the Tea Party and Occupy that is largely unrecognized that changes our perception of how organizations like these operate today. In recognizing the heterogeneity of the Tea Party and Occupy, definitions concerning their purpose become rather obsolete and one is forced to focus on the individuals or small groupings in them to garner meaning. As a result, the Tea Party and Occupy develop for better or worse many different facets that can suit a multitude of interest in the American political system. In so doing, both become rather fluid in their existence that makes it difficult to mark a clear beginning or ending. Indeed, the closure of Occupy has been declared by many as an end to Occupy, but there are still activists out there that work under the banner of Occupy with different purposes, as Occupy Sandy demonstrated. While the Tea Party appears to be absorbed into the Republican Party in the standard political narrative, there are still those organizations working under the name of the Tea Party who are protesting Sarah Palin, as highlighted in Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson's book *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*. Moreover, as the PorcFest in 2013 demonstrated with attendees from both the Tea Party and Occupy present, their boundaries can even extend beyond those operating under the guises of the

Tea Party and Occupy. This was an evolution that could not have happened without the libertarian alliance that developed in the working groups of Occupy and exposes the possibilities that future events could bring as well.

Ultimately though, the simultaneous realization of these new ideas and revival of an old ideal caused a metamorphosis within individual and community libertarians that led not only to a differentiation with libertarians working within established institutions. Conservatives in the Tea Party and progressives in Occupy may have agreed with some of the problems that libertarians perceived in society, but they radically departed from libertarian solutions to those problems. While conservatives and progressives also advocated a limited form of grassroots activism, they also shied away from notions of direct democracy, or more interactive forms of governance, and continued to advocate a representative system. These disagreements were accentuated by the fact that conservatives dominated Tea Party organizations and progressives controlled Occupy sites, leaving libertarians feeling voiceless and frustrated. As a result, the association with the Tea Party and Occupy became superfluous for some libertarians and they began looking for new associations, as outlined in chapters 2 and 3, to mobilize and to put into action these new ideas that developed after their experiences in both.

This search began with the Tea Party coalition finding itself welcomed in working groups run by the Occupy libertarian community, who had withdrawn from the progressive-dominated General Assemblies to develop and further their activism. Within these working groups, there was a fusion of the individual libertarian and community libertarian agendas that has shifted away an emphasis on the cause of the problems in society today towards an emphasis on how they envision the future. Whereas individual libertarians focused on government and politicians and community libertarians focused on organized capital as the causes to problems in society, they both envision a society where the state does not exist and individuals organize themselves as they want. This presented a common cause that further possessed the possibility of uniting both into a general libertarian movement that moves beyond the previous links to conservatives and progressives.

Chapter 5

The Emerging Importance of the Libertarian Festival as a Successor to the Tea Party and Occupy

Despite the shortcomings of the Tea Party and Occupy, there were and still are libertarians who remained in both to continue what they had initiated with the hope of garnering results. Conversely, the libertarians who grew weary of the friction with other ideologies looked for other organizing agents that could meet libertarian expectations while not simultaneously marginalizing them. Notwithstanding the divergence with the Tea Party libertarian coalition and Occupy libertarian community, both those who remained and left simultaneously looked to other venues outside the Tea Party and Occupy to either circumvent their issues in both or increase their impact within those affiliated organizations.

In tandem to this strategy, they also sought to offer non-libertarians in the Tea Party and Occupy a chance to experience libertarian activism unfettered by and independent of other ideologies. This was a result of the realization amongst libertarians participating in Tea Party and Occupy organizations through their attempts to communicate and exchange their ideas with others that libertarianism is something distinct from mainstream politics. After decades of existing in the shadows of conservatism, progressivism, and other ideologies, libertarians were eager to further this realization by asserting the independence they had gained and grow by sharing it with others. Moreover, for those who discovered a new comradery between the individual and community factions, there was an eagerness to

continue this development and expand their ranks that had arisen in the now closed occupations of Occupy.

Libertarian festivals offered a venue for these goals, in that they were present across the country and acted very much like the Tea Party and Occupy. These festivals involve an exchange of political ideas, introduce alternative lifestyles, and, probably most importantly, offer a networking tool for the future. They provided an opportunity for the Tea Party libertarian coalition and Occupy libertarian community to escape the hostility they experienced in previous organizations and build a supportive network for the future. In so doing, even though they pre-date the Tea Party and Occupy, the libertarian festival is in effect becoming an extension of those organizing agents via the libertarians activists in both.

Furthermore, they demonstrate another facet of the Tea Party and Occupy that has and continues to be relatively unnoticed: Tea Party and Occupy activism is not limited to the occupation of city blocks or marches on the Mall in Washington, D.C. Libertarian festivals represent the continuation of the motivation that was also initially present at the outset of the Tea Party and Occupy, namely the growth of non-partisan organizing agents that seek to affect change in civil society. Indeed, the libertarian festival brings about a full understanding of just how diverse Tea Party and Occupy activism is with regards to ideology and its ability to accommodate other facets of political society.

The foremost example would obviously be the PorcFest, the libertarian festival in New Hampshire that seeks to recruit 20,000 activists to the “Free State Project” that would initiate the first libertarian society.⁴¹⁰ This festival reinforces how Tea Party and Occupy

⁴¹⁰ The Free State Project was described as follows: “In 2003, New Hampshire was chosen. Since then, more than 16,000 people have signed the Statement of Intent to move when the target is hit – and 1,674 participants have already made the move!” “A Proven Strategy for Liberty in Our Lifetime,” *Free State Project*,

activists aren't only furious with political, economic, and business figures in American society, but that they were also looking to change its very foundations. PorcFest also provides evidence regarding the nature of the Tea Party and Occupy as organizing agents and not ideological movements, as participants in both are found at this festival advocating similar positions. As activists from both are present at PorcFest, it further provides the opportunity to advance the united Tea Party-Occupy libertarian agenda that had developed at Occupy sites across the country, especially since the occupations have been shut down. PorcFest is particularly interesting in this respect because of its simultaneous purpose of presenting the Free State Project, who wants to create a libertarian society in New Hampshire, with other activists who advocate or present ideas that have either nothing to do with this new society or may even contradict it.

The Free State Project and the Alt-Expo

The PorcFest was an event originally developed for libertarian-minded individuals to gather and discuss their experiences, but it has now become a hub of various influences that are able to interact as a result of those libertarian foundations. The title of the festival is derived from the porcupine that is one of the symbols of libertarianism, which was chosen

<https://freestateproject.org/about>, viewed on 03 February 2015 There is controversy surrounding the Free State Project though amongst many libertarian activists. Specifically, as a result of the Objectivist influence within the organization, independent libertarians are highly skeptical of the corporate influence as a result of funding. This is not because they are necessarily against the free market, but because they view corporations as appendages of the state, monopolies created by government, and they are therefore skeptical.

because of its “prickly” nature and is usually used in conjunction with the Gadsden flag.⁴¹¹ The Free State Project is responsible for its organization and they seek to establish a libertarian society in New Hampshire, with PorcFest being an opportunity to advocate this point. However, there are also alternative lifestyle activists, simple entrepreneurs, currency activists, and even those promoting other festivals around the country there, making it a rather pluralistic event. This is a result of the rather commonly known unique political climate that New Hampshire has defined for itself, setting it apart from the rest of the region in New England. In fact, New Hampshire is rather an anomaly within the United States as a whole in that while it differs from its rather liberal neighbors in the northeast, it also contrasts with other conservative states that could be found in the south or west.

The libertarian foundation of PorcFest was based on individualistic libertarians who held strong views on private property and aversions to collective organization and communal ownership. However, shortly after the establishment of PorcFest, other types of libertarians began to appear to promote their version of the ideology that may not have coincided with those founders at the Free State Project that helps explain the existence of other motivations at PorcFest. The emergence of the Tea Party and Occupy, increased this heterogeneity, along with a general increase in activists attending the festival. Therefore, to assist in understanding the nature of the PorcFest, the Free State Project will be compared with the Alt-Expo, the group mentioned at the outset at PorcFest 2013. However, it will become clear that despite the differences that do exist between them, both recognize each other as libertarians and accept the differences they have with one another in exchange for the tolerance of their positions in return. This translates into a further burgeoning of other

⁴¹¹ Libertarians pride themselves on being fiercely independent and rather difficult to control, which would explain the porcupine reference. The phrase “attempting to herd cats” is also used when trying to organize libertarians for an event.

libertarian factions that ironically reinforces the core libertarian belief of non-aggression outlined in previous chapters.

The creators and organizers of the PorcFest are those involved in the Free State Project, an organization largely influenced by participants from the Libertarian Party, activists who worked on the Ron Paul campaigns, and second amendment activists exercising their right to carry fire arms in the open.⁴¹² The sole purpose of the organization is to transform New Hampshire into the first libertarian state in America and, according to members, the world. “We [the Free State Project] are looking for neighborly, productive, tolerant folks from any and all walks of life, of all ages, creeds, and colors, who agree to the political philosophy expressed in our Statement of Intent, that government exists at most to protect people's rights, and should neither provide for people nor punish them for activities that interfere with no one else.”⁴¹³ However, the Free State Project, while seeking to specifically transform New Hampshire into a libertarian society, reaches out to libertarians across the country and the world from various backgrounds.⁴¹⁴ As a result, this initially regional event has transformed into something much more concerning the ideology of libertarianism and its long-term viability.

The Free State Project has specific goals and visions for society that are largely individual libertarian goals, as mentioned above, and would seem familiar with those acquainted with the Tea Party libertarian coalition. They advocate “voluntary human

⁴¹²Jason Sorens, a member of the board for the Free State Project, announced how the project was started after the failure of the Libertarian Party to gain traction in the 2000 election. “The idea behind the Free State Project came out of libertarian self-reflection in the aftermath of the election of 2000, when the Libertarian Party's paid membership hit its all-time high, yet Libertarian electoral results remained poor, and neither major party had any notable libertarian current.” “A Brief History of the FSP,” *Free State Project*, <https://freestateproject.org/about/organization/history>, viewed on 03 February 2015

⁴¹³ “A Proven Strategy for Liberty in Our Lifetime,” *Free State Project*, <https://freestateproject.org/about>, viewed on 03 February 2015

⁴¹⁴ Activists from France and the United Kingdom were observed at PorcFest in 2013 and 2014.

interaction” and “the condemnation of any *initiation* of force,” as well as the “the principle of Self-Ownership...i.e. that every individual owns him/herself exclusively. Individualism, peace, and private property is our mantra.”⁴¹⁵ They also hold to the principle of “freed markets,” with one activist stating that they wanted “to spread the message about free markets, to make them understand that our economy is already essentially planned.”⁴¹⁶ The structure of the Free State Project reflects these positions, as well as the anti-political stance that many of the participants hold, as it is a 501(c)(3) educational non-profit organization and not a political action organization. This is more of a statement of intent though, as its website also maintains that its purpose is to educate “people about the advantages of New Hampshire for liberty folks, and about the advantages for liberty of like-minded people gathering and working together in one place.”⁴¹⁷ While the goal of the Free State Project is not to obtain political power through government, participants are nevertheless working with and advocating a political philosophy.

The divide between the Free State Project and political involvement in government is also probably not as finite as those participating in the organization would prefer though, with a somewhat sizeable grey area emerging when looking past the surface. Chris Moody, a CNN correspondent who visited PorcFest, made the following comment: “While progress has been slow, more than 1,000 people have already moved here to prepare the way for the rest, and a handful of Free Staters have even been elected to the New Hampshire state

⁴¹⁵ Interviewee Independent 3, Asheville, North Carolina, USA, Volume II, pg. 228- via Facebook, 17 December 2012. This activist was originally a member of the Blue Ridge Liberty Project, but has since moved to New Hampshire and has joined the Free State Project.

⁴¹⁶ Interviewee Tea Party 1, Vietnam Veterans Plaza, New York City, 30 August 2012, Volume II, pg. 4

⁴¹⁷ “A Proven Strategy for Liberty in Our Lifetime,” *Free State Project*, <https://freestateproject.org/about>, viewed on 03 February 2015

legislature.”⁴¹⁸ The presence of Free Staters in the New Hampshire legislature was also confirmed by *Reason*: “According to Ian Freeman at Free Keene, at least 15 explicit Free Staters—a record number—will be ushered in as lawmakers in the 424-seat body.”⁴¹⁹ While these candidates may not have received direct financial backing from the Free State Project, the activism of the Free State Project as defined by its legal status, coupled with the organization of the PorcFest, presents a possible conflict of interest with these “Free Staters” politicians. The PorcFest can act as an indirect platform for these “politicians” to gather support and advocate policy positions. However, it is a grey area and it would appear that the Free State Project does follow the legality of its organizational structure. It is noteworthy nevertheless in that “there is a growing faction of libertarians against the Free State Project” specifically for reasons like this one.⁴²⁰

Despite this controversy, the plurality of participants in the Free State Project would explain the abundance of topics emphasizing the importance of trade, currencies, and the ability to keep markets truly free. Presentations and talks also deal with specific subject matters like “The Inevitable Collapse of the State” and “Zerogov: Limited Government, Unicorns, and Other Mythological Creatures.” Eventually, as the festival has developed, the subject matter has become more expansive to include non-ideological talking points like “DIY Conflict Resolution: No DROs? No Problem,” but the festival is still largely political in nature. It ultimately expanded further to include seminars on technology and growing your own food that had more to do with everyday living. While these may seem like rather obscure presentations and topics of discussion at a largely political event, there is a reason

⁴¹⁸ “Being Moody: Inside the movement to take over New Hampshire,” *CNNPolitics.com*, published on 10 July 2015, viewed on 10 September 2015

⁴¹⁹ J.D. Tuccile, “Free Staters Win ‘At Least’ 15 Seats in NH State House; Libertarian Leaners Win Many More,” *Reason.com*, published on 5 November 2014, viewed on 10 September 2015

⁴²⁰ Interviewee Independent 13, PorcFest XI, New Hampshire, 21 June 2014, Volume II, pg. 305

behind this evolution. Each presentation seems tailored to educate individuals in libertarian theory to facilitate their future transition into this libertarian society while enabling the possibilities of living “off the grid” or outside the state system while that society develops. Given that over sixteen thousand people have signed on to the project, the realization of the “Free State Project” appears to be on track to become a reality.

However, as PorcFest grew and the goal of creating a “libertarian society” had spread, so did the variety of libertarians attending, with the Alt-Expo, a “left-libertarian” or more community-centered libertarian organization, being one such example of the diversification occurring. Alt-Expo, or the Alternatives Exposition, is a collection of activists who take pride in presenting a different facet of libertarianism and held their first meeting in 2007. This first gathering led to 16 consecutive events, with some occurring at PorcFest.⁴²¹ Libertarians, like Nick Ford and Jack Shimek, brought a variety of libertarianism to PorcFest more aligned with the Occupy libertarian community, advocating issues like the dangers of state capitalism, the benefits of cooperative organizations, and alternative social arrangements (e.g. polyamory, etc.). They still adhere to the ideal of “freed markets,” as described in the chapter on the Tea Party libertarian coalition, but they also recognize more “left-wing” criticisms concerning capitalism today. Therefore, Alt-Expo presents a rather different interpretation to libertarianism when compared to the Free State Project.

The difference could not be more apparent than with the organizational structure that Alt-Exo assumes in relation to the Free State Project. Shimek and Ford operate an

⁴²¹ “About Us,” *Alt Expo: The Roadmap to the Road Less Travelled*, <http://altexpo.org/about>, viewed on 03 February 2015 “The Alternatives Expo becomes an incubator of ideas and practices for living an alternative to the state-controlled, regimented life where distant monopoly cartels dictate your every decision. We learn at AltExpo events how to actually practice things in real life we've only theorized before. The Alternatives Expo offers an environment for free expression and creative fulfillment in the company of interested and supportive others. The Alternatives Expo becomes a model of non-hierarchical, self-organizing activities and friendly co-operation. It's a place where we share and learn how to ‘be all that we can be.’”

organization that could be akin to a cooperative, with the only hesitation being that even this assumption might mischaracterize the incredible openness of the organization. While Alt-Expo does require funding, this is not done through mandatory membership or event fees but through the concept of voluntarism. The belief one gets from these organizers and their members is that they fundamentally adhere to the notion that if people support them, they will provide funding. Otherwise, their work and activism would and should not be worth doing (applying the very concept of the “freed market”). Therefore, there is an extreme egalitarianism to all involved in the group and an enthusiasm to provide evidence and confirmation of their world view. In so doing, Shimek, Ford, and their co-community libertarians are providing a strong contrast at PorcFest to the Free State Project, who has members located in political positions, is officially registered as a non-taxable entity, and centered on a relatively structured organization with hierarchy.

Another sign of the contrast that Alt-Expo has with the Free State Project is its affiliation with the Alliance of the Libertarian Left, which represents a very different branch of libertarianism than the one of the Free State Project.⁴²² As stated when explaining the Occupy libertarian community, left libertarians are largely composed of two categories: one defined by the likes of Peter Vallentyne and the other defined by Murray Rothbard and Karl Hess. The main difference between the two is that the Vallentyne version places a limit on private property while Rothbard’s approach follows the trend of “classic 19th century

⁴²² “The Alliance of the Libertarian Left is a multi-tendency coalition of mutualists, agorists, voluntaryists, geolibertarians, left-Rothbardians, green libertarians, dialectical anarchists, radical minarchists, and others on the libertarian left, united by an opposition to statism and militarism, to cultural intolerance (including sexism, racism, and homophobia), and to the prevailing corporatist capitalism falsely called a free market; as well as by an emphasis on education, direct action, and building alternative institutions, rather than on electoral politics, as our chief strategy for achieving liberation.” Homepage, *Alliance of the Libertarian Left*, <http://praxeology.net/all-left.htm>, viewed on 6 May 2016

individualists, Georgists, and many other traditions.”⁴²³ However, the Alliance of the Libertarian Left, while including these elements, sees itself as part of the broader community of “those in the anarchist movement at large, . . . the whole non-statist, horizontal or decentralist Left- everybody but Social Democrats and Leninists.”⁴²⁴ A guest at Alt-Expo from the Alliance of the Libertarian Left highlighted these points in stating “I got interested in the market stuff precisely because I thought it helped integrate a lot of my concerns and the stuff that I had learned about corporate power and how it operated with this deepening of a commitment to the left-wing and social anarchist goals that I had.”⁴²⁵

This influences the outlook of Alt-Expo in a different manner than that of the Free State Project and its goals of creating an individualistic libertarian society in New Hampshire, as well as Alt Expo seeking a more general shift in focus amongst the American population. Ford stated, “Alt-Expo has linked up a little bit with the FSP, so we are in the main event, but we have our own events as well. We don't let the FSP control what events we put on.”⁴²⁶ The Alt-Expo is also present at the Boston Anarchist Book Festival for the past few years and the New York Book Fair, which moved to the East Village.⁴²⁷ This is an important note in that the Anarchist Book Fair is normally associated with traditional anarchists and libertarian socialism, which have a very different approach to property than the Free State Project. Members in Alt-Expo also work with the Center for a Stateless Society (C4SS), which is a “left-wing, market anarchist institute that basically is a think tank for the left-libertarian

⁴²³ Kevin Carson, “What is Left-Libertarianism?” *Center for a Stateless Society*, <https://c4ss.org/content/28216>, published on 15 June 2014, viewed on 22 April 2016

⁴²⁴ Kevin Carson, “What is Left-Libertarianism?” *Center for a Stateless Society*, <https://c4ss.org/content/28216>, published on 15 June 2014, viewed on 22 April 2016

⁴²⁵ Interviewee Independent 11, Porcfest X, New Hampshire, USA, 22 June 2013, Volume pg. 295

⁴²⁶ Interviewee Independent 7, New Hampshire, USA, via Skype, 4 April 2013, Volume II, pg. 264

⁴²⁷ Interviewee Independent 7, New Hampshire, USA, via Skype, 4 April 2013, Volume II, pg. 264

movement. It publishes op-eds and publishes in mainstream newspapers all the time.”⁴²⁸ Some of those attending Alt-Expo not only held a more varied position on libertarianism, but their views were sometimes contradictory with the individualist approach of the Free State project.

The objectives of Alt-Expo talks and discussions are similar to that of PorcFest, which is to prepare for the emergence of a “libertarian” New Hampshire, but the direction is towards a different destination. Examples of presentations made like “Libertarians Against Capitalism!” and “Shire Co-op: The Next Level,” strike a noticeable contrast to individual libertarianism and the activists associated with the Free State Project. They also approach other topics that are either roadblocks or more controversial subjects involving libertarian activism, such as the presentation on conspiracy theories as mentioned in the introduction. Alt-Expo also provided other practical presentations to complement those of the Free State Project, with examples being “Mesh Networking 101” and “How to Fail Well.” The emphasis is more on how individuals will interact in this new “libertarian” society, while the Free State Project looks at enabling individuals to break free and start their new life. They are seeking to remind activists and those new to PorcFest that this new libertarian society did not necessarily have to be only an individualist libertarian.

What is unique and simultaneously impressive about these contradictory elements is that they both avoid conflict and internal strife amongst adherents to either message and, by and large, work in tandem. The Free State Project is an excellent initiator to libertarianism, in that, by emphasizing change with the individual, the ideology of libertarianism is incorporated at a more personal level and establishes a stronger

⁴²⁸ Interviewee Independent 7, New Hampshire, USA, via Skype, 4 April 2013, Volume II, pg. 264

foundation. Alt-Expo then presents how recently converted libertarians and more experienced ones can find alternative fashions for interaction, since differentiation appears to be a libertarian norm, as each individual will have a specific orientation according to the personal reasons for adopting the ideology. Therefore, as the Tea Party libertarian coalition did in the Occupy working groups, the Free State Project and Alt-Expo are furthering a blending of the individual and community centered approach that appears to be creating a separate libertarian ideological world from the one that the rest of the country would recognize as libertarian. Even if the PorcFest may be unique in size and the duration of its existence, it is representative of the growing diversity of libertarians emerging since the presence of the Tea Party and Occupy and the experiences of other libertarian festivals around the country.

The Tea Party and Occupy Reimagined

In framing the Free State Project and Alt-Expo as such, one could make parallels from PorcFest to the Tea Party and Occupy in its function as organizing agents. The PorcFest was ideologically neutral and acted as an organizing agent for different types of libertarians so that they could exchange ideas and grow their ideology. Each activist is free to conduct their own presentations, meetings, commerce, or just conversations as long as they have paid for their allotment at or entrance fee onto the campsite. Furthermore, the fact that there were activists from both the Tea Party and Occupy present at PorcFest indicates a certain commonality in function and purpose between all of them. Yet, there is one

immediate difference between PorcFest and the Tea Party and Occupy: PorcFest adhered to libertarian principles that were inviolable, a fact of which attendees were proud. While there were indications that the Tea Party and Occupy were founded by libertarians, their evolution took them away from libertarian principles that permitted their domination by certain activists and the marginalization of those who were in the minority. When considering these libertarian origins, one cannot help but imagine if the PorcFest was more akin to what those initiators had in mind.

Indeed, there were many members from the Tea Party libertarian coalition and the Occupy libertarian community at PorcFest looking to continue what they had started with those respective organizing agents. This was evident only if one was familiar with Tea Party and Occupy libertarian activism though, as there were no banners claiming affiliation with either. Yet, at the presentation “Conspiracy Theorists vs Skeptics,” one of the debaters was a Tea Party libertarian interviewed for this project and many of his co-activists were in the crowd. There were also members present who were loosely connected (at least) with Alt-Expo, who were also interviewed, performing Occupy hand gestures in support of the Tea Party activist at the head of the presentation. It was a perfect mixture of activists from both groups acting in conjunction and not separately or in a segregated fashion, displaying how far Tea Party and Occupy libertarians have come since their beginnings. The popularity and visibility of both organizing agents transformed PorcFest from a fringe event into something that is now growing more relevant in American society by exposing more Americans to the ideology of libertarianism.⁴²⁹ It also demonstrated how PorcFest worked in similar ways as

⁴²⁹ The Economist thought it worthy of notice, stating, “More than 1,600 “Free Staters” have already made New Hampshire their home. They are beginning to have an effect. In 2012 the Granite State became the first to allow lawyers to tell juries they may acquit a defendant if they believe the law is unfair. In 2011 the state stripped away much of the red tape that kept home brewers from selling their wares, spawning a boom of

the Tea Party and Occupy; so well in fact that some libertarians were turning towards the PorcFest as their preferred organizing agent.

PorcFest also offered to libertarians what both the Tea Party and Occupy could, but simultaneously and not divided by ideological barriers that, to libertarians, were meaningless. It had the kitchens (but not free), “the working groups,” the central “assembly” area, and the alternative culture that was often associated with the occupations in New York and elsewhere. Free market capitalism (in every sense of the phrase), the practicing of the second amendment, an anti-government personae, and moral debates were not only preached like they were in the Tea Party, but very much practiced in New Hampshire. This all happened in tandem and openly for all to participate in, meaning that libertarians did not have to take refuge in a working group like in Occupy or experience exclusion like from Tea Party organizations. PorcFest was the organizing agent that permitted libertarians of various creeds to express their beliefs and ideas without judgement and generally with open acceptance and consolidation from others.

However, while it melded the qualities and characteristics of both the Tea Party and Occupy, the PorcFest did not incorporate the conservatism and progressivism that had become associated with them respectively. Largely as a result of the Free State Project being the originators and also the organizers of the event, this event has always had a libertarian theme. This did not exclude non-libertarians from attending and there were

“nanobreweries”. And in January the state House was the first legislative body in the country to vote to legalize marijuana for recreational use, although lawmakers backed down when Governor Maggie Hassan, a Democrat, proved reluctant.” “PorcFest and the Free State Project: Anarchists get organized,” 05 July 2014, <http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21606296-plot-liberate-new-hampshire-anarchists-get-organised>, viewed on 03 February 2015. The New York Times also mentioned PorcFest in the article from their magazine. Robert Draper, “Has the ‘Libertarian Moment’ Finally Arrived?” *New York Times Magazine*, published on 7 August 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/10/magazine/has-the-libertarian-moment-finally-arrived.html?_r=0, viewed on 03 February 2015

journalists, the curious, and people who just like camping at the week-long event. However, participants defended the libertarian “identity” fiercely in an effort to avoid the same fate that happened in the Tea Party and Occupy, as mentioned above. An example of this fierceness was the reaction of some activists to government regulators coming onto the camp grounds to inspect the food stands to ensure they were registered to serve and collect tax:

Activist: What would be the options on the table?

Regulator: If you read the statute, you will see.

Activist: I don’t really care what your statutes say. I am asking you what are the options on the table for someone who doesn’t have one of your permits.

Regulator: Stop serving food.

Activist: Or else what?

Regulator: As I said, I’ll go back to the office and talk about it.

Activist: You’re just avoiding saying what’s really going to happen. You’re going to call men with guns to threaten that person, aren’t you?⁴³⁰

These officials were then escorted inside the campgrounds office, where after some time, they were convinced to leave with no further questions while a crowd of libertarians jeered and filmed them as they left.

It was very noticeable at this rather rich and diverse political event the absence of tactics used by conservative and progressive activists in the Tea Party and Occupy. There were no attempts by the Free State Project to manipulate individual libertarians to act against their own interest for political and economic gain, as corporate interest did with the Tea Party. While the Alt-Expo may have had similar concerns about organized capital to those of progressives, they avoided the elitism and controlling nature that was so prevalent in Occupy organizations. It all possessed a level of cohesion because they follow the “non-

⁴³⁰ “What Happens When Govt Thugs Threaten PorcFest,” FreeKeane, *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNKObXQ5uTA>, published 2 June 2015, viewed on 18 April 2016

aggression principle” by accepting that others were going to hold differing viewpoints while nevertheless adhering to a common vision for the future.

Yet, this is not to say that the Tea Party and Occupy had no effect on PorcFest, with the precautions against majoritarian and, what libertarians would consider, authoritarian ideologies being just one. Indeed, the most significant change that occurred as a result of the Tea Party and Occupy was the growth in the number of libertarians and those exposed to the ideology. When the first PorcFest happened, or PorcFest 0, it was a generous assumption to associate the event with a festival in that the amount of participants equated to a camping trip in rural New Hampshire. The number of participants spiked for PorcFest I, but remained relatively steady up to PorcFest V in 2008, with around 400-500 people attending the events. However, after 2008, the amount of participants began to continuously grow, which correlates first to the emergence of the Tea Party followed by Occupy. The statistics are as follows: PorcFest VI (2009) with 600 participants, PorcFest VII (2010) with 800 participants, PorcFest VIII (2011) with 900 participants, PorcFest IX (2012) with 1,000 participants, and PorcFest X (2013) with up to 1,500 participants.⁴³¹ While the figures for PorcFest XI have yet to be confirmed, rumors were circulating that the amount had almost doubled from the previous year, indicating yet again the immense effect the Tea Party and Occupy have had on libertarianism.

The experience libertarians gained through the working groups in Occupy and the meetings with Tea Party members contributed to the growth of discussion and debate at PorcFest, which had already been significant beforehand. At PorcFest, there are talks, for example, oriented around alternative economies, with agorism, cooperatives, and new

⁴³¹ The PorcFest XI Handbook This number was also confirmed in the Economist article in note 348.

productions methods being just the surface of what is being discussed and debated. Political discussion, whether formally scheduled or spontaneously developing outside of the main tents, all are concentrated on how libertarians and, in effect, Americans could in general gain control over their lives and shape their political and societal future. All of these examples, and many others like them, display how determined activists at PorcFest have become in developing an independent political force that attempts to create a new political universe for Americans to operate within.

Agorism, one example of these new ideas, is a terminology used by libertarians and borrowed from the Greek “agora” to describe their type of alternative economy. It is basically a free-market system unfettered by state involvement.⁴³² However, it also has a subversive quality to it, like “a peaceful black market or underground economy.”⁴³³ Some libertarians also couple agorism with cooperatives and new technological developments to enhance their positions on “freed markets” or to improve on common property. Libertarians are keen on cooperatives because of the voluntary and the evidently cooperative nature found within them and absence of conventional authority structure found within corporate structures today, with John Curl’s *For All The People* being a good source on these topics. Finally, additive manufacturing or 3D printing has become another hot topic for libertarians, with one talk dedicated to the new technology at PorcFest 2014. 3D printing is basically like conventional printing, but just in three dimensions, and means that anyone who has a computer and these new printers can basically produce a product on

⁴³² Samuel Edward Konkin III,, *New Libertarian Manifesto* (Christopher D. Seely, 2006) pg. 23

⁴³³ Wally Conger, , *Agorist Class Theory*, (Christopher D. Seely, 2006) pg. 69 A contemporary source would be the *Stealth of Nations* (New York, USA: First Anarcho Books, 2011) by Robert Neuwirth, just on a more global scale.

their own without a factory.⁴³⁴ Some libertarians are even part of the Maker Movement, which is an activist group based on 3D printing.⁴³⁵ One comment on this process is the following, “But today we have a path to reverse that- not by returning to the giant factories of old, with the armies of employees, but by creating a new kind of manufacturing economy, one shaped more like the Web itself: bottom-up, broadly distributed, and highly entrepreneurial .”⁴³⁶

Alternative currencies, whether they be the traditional gold or silver currencies or the much more modern bitcoin, are all acceptable at each stand for food, products, and purchasable information. Bitcoin has become an extremely popular topic amongst libertarians, overtaking gold and silver as a replacement for the currency backed by the Federal Reserve. “Bitcoin is a consensus network that enables a new payment system and a completely digital money. It is the first decentralized peer-to-peer payment network that is powered by its users with no central authority or middlemen. From a user perspective, Bitcoin is pretty much like cash for the internet. Bitcoin can also be seen as the most

⁴³⁴ “Think about pushing the print button on your computer and sending a digital file to an inkjet, except, with 3-D printing, the machine runs off a three-dimensional product. Using computer aided design, software directs the 3-D printer to build successive layers of the product using power, molten plastic, or metals to create the material scaffolding. The 3-D printer can produce multiple copies just like a photocopy machine. All sorts of goods, from jewelry to mobile phones, auto and aircraft parts, medical implants, and batteries are being ‘printed out’ in what is being termed ‘additive manufacturing,’ distinguishing it from the ‘subtractive manufacturing,’ which involves cutting down and paring off materials and then attaching them together.” Jeremy Rifkin, *The Third Industrial Revolution*, (New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pg. 117

⁴³⁵ The Maker Movement is a group of designers who use 3-D printing as a political tool in addition to the manufacturing function. Chris Anderson explains it in the following words: “In short, the Maker Movement shares three characteristics, all of which I’d argue, are transformative: 1. People using digital desktop tools to create designs for new products and prototype them (digital ‘DIY’); 2. A cultural norm to share those designs and collaborate with others in online communities; 3; The use of common design file standards that allow anyone, if they desire, to send their designs to commercial manufacturing services to be produced in any number, just as easily as they can fabricate them on their desktop. This radically foreshortens the path from idea to entrepreneurship, just as the Web did in software, information, and content.” Chris Anderson, *Makers, the New Industrial Revolution*, (London, UK: Random House, 2012), pg. 21

⁴³⁶ Kevin A. Carson with *The Homebrew Industrial Revolution*, (Book Surge, 2010) is another source on 3-D printing that is also combined with a left-libertarian position.

prominent triple entry bookkeeping system in existence.”⁴³⁷ In addition to Bitcoin, there are also other “cryptocurrencies,” as they have become known, like Ethereum and Ripple, but are much rarer to come across than Bitcoin. For those who do not feel comfortable using the new cryptocurrencies, slips of silver were commonly exchanged on the campgrounds during PorcFest.

Differing lifestyles are perfectly acceptable at these events, as one can find camouflage dressed activists armed with rifles and hand guns sitting next to a gay dance party event that advertised a future “polyamory” event later that day.⁴³⁸ An activist interviewed for this dissertation described themselves as polyamorist, which can be described in the following quote: “The cure is firstly to recognize that no one is the owner of the sex functions of another, and secondly, to accept only love or affection which is voluntarily given: ‘All lovers do well to leave the doors of their love wide open.’”⁴³⁹

The atmosphere at PorcFest permitted the development of an independent political universe from mainstream politics that was not possible in the Tea Party and Occupy that led to a shift in thinking. An activist at PorcFest described Bitcoin as the following: “It is pretty much the first time people can have a banking service and financial service pretty much instantly and free.”⁴⁴⁰ Catherine Bleish, a popular libertarian activist, emphasized the importance of lifestyle choices in libertarian activism by highlighting, “In order to truly do something to become freer, I had to stop participating in that system. I had to start living a

⁴³⁷“FAQ- Bitcoin,” *Bitcoin*, <https://bitcoin.org/en/faq#what-is-bitcoin>, viewed on 9 December 2014

⁴³⁸ While libertarians are normally associated with the second amendment and gun ownership, they are also supporters of “alternative” lifestyles. One activist interviewed for this dissertation was a member of the LGBT Libertarians that stated, “This page is meant to show the LGBT community that there is a political philosophy which they can subscribe to that recognizes their individual civil liberties without having to endorse progressive economic government intervention.” “LGBT Libertarians,” *Facebook*, https://www.facebook.com/LGBTlibertarians/info?tab=page_info, viewed on the 9 December 2014

⁴³⁹ Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, (London, UK: Harper Perennial, 2008) pg. 408

⁴⁴⁰ Interviewee Independent 8, PorcFest X 2013, New Hampshire, June 2013, Volume II, pg. 273

self-sufficient, sustainable- in the true sense of the word “sustainable”- a truly sustainable lifestyle.”⁴⁴¹ It became self-evident to libertarians that they had no interest in partisan politics and sought to evolve independently, which further supports how the Tea Party and Occupy can appear partisan while also having activists expressing political neutralism. It was exemplified by an activist from the Alliance of the Libertarian Left at PorcFest X 2013 in stating, “Anarchism really provided me a way to try and think through some of this stuff. You know- ‘what is it that a grassroots people power version of these justice movements might look like.’”⁴⁴²

Indeed, what is truly striking about PorcFest in comparison to the Tea Party and Occupy is how independent in nature it has remained, establishing a separation between the libertarianism practiced by the activists at festivals like the PorcFest from the libertarians at institutes like the Cato Institute. The libertarianism of the Cato Institute is very “Objectivist” influenced, which means that it is heavily in support of corporations and takes a rather strong minarchist approach to the state.⁴⁴³ While libertarians at the PorcFest do not object to the free market, the strong corporate and minarchist positions are no longer as palatable to those libertarians attending the New Hampshire festival as they once

⁴⁴¹ SovereignLivingTV, “Catherine Bleish at PorcFest 2012 on Beginners Gardening and Chicken Raising,” *YouTube*, published on 30 July 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXGcxtt1zOs>, 28 November 2014

⁴⁴² Interviewee Independent 12, PorcFest X, New Hampshire, June 2013, Volume II, pg. 293

⁴⁴³ Ayn Rand is an interesting topic amongst libertarians today. While for non-libertarians Ayn Rand is representative of the ideology, her influence in the modern day movement isn’t as all-encompassing as non-libertarians believe. Murray Rothbard, a major influence to both individual and community libertarians today, stated the following, “In religious cults, there’s an exoteric creed, which is the creed for the public, the printed writings, which draws people into the movement. Then there’s the esoteric stuff. That’s the stuff you get when you reach thirty three degree whatever. ‘Here’s what we really believe fellas.’ You work your way up to that. It’s a very similar thing in the Randian movement. The exoteric stuff was great. Super stuff- Natural rights, liberty, reason, and all that, which is why most of us got into it. Then the esoteric stuff was quite different. It was almost contradictory. She created all kinds of fantastic problems.” Conza88, “Rothbard on Ayn Rand,” *YouTube*, 23 October 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dejVMFLpQuY>, viewed 8 December 2014

had been.⁴⁴⁴ They are more comfortable in developing their own positions and policies than relying on institutes or even prominent figures to decide on their behalf. Libertarians today are much more decentralized and abhor any attempts at top-down organization, which thusly makes them averse to any conventional political involvement and resist any attempts to change the political system from within.⁴⁴⁵

One very prominent example in action was the debate at PorcFest XI in 2014 concerning an article by Christopher Cantwell and the use of defensive force against law enforcement.⁴⁴⁶ At PorcFest, each institution of the state is systematically questioned, to such a point that an article about resisting law enforcement written by a libertarian activist had become the subject of heated debate. The main thrust of the argument was the following:

⁴⁴⁴ “Well, let’s compromise. Let’s invent this thing call minarchism.’ It’s like advocating for cutting out 90% of a cancer, but, in and of itself, the idea of minarchism is a poison to the message.” AdamKokesh, “Libertarians need to get over Rand Paul,” *YouTube*, published on 21 April 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zNA1YSMrug>, viewed on the 9 December 2014

⁴⁴⁵ There are many examples of libertarian politicians within the Libertarian Party or like Ron Paul, who go against the grain of this anarchist trend growing within libertarian ranks. However, as an activist stated, “If you come down to it you’re part of Ron Paul Inc. or you’re a Ron Paul Inc. sympathizer. If you are one of these Paulbots who think that Ron Paul is perfect and can do no wrong, we should just support him and Rand regardless of whether they violate their principles, I consider you part of Ron Paul Inc. or a Ron Paul Inc. sympathizer. For me, the Ragamuffins are those who standup for libertarian principle regardless of how it makes us look to mainstream Republicans. We can’t sacrifice the message to perpetuate the message. It doesn’t make sense.” AdamKokesh, “Danny Panzella – The Ragamuffins vs Ron Paul Inc,” *YouTube*, 4 October 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMBLO-HqPHE>, viewed on 6 June 2013 Another example of this growing antagonism towards libertarian politicians are the following comments directed towards Rand Paul: “This is a perversion of libertarianism. This is not just throwing libertarians under the bus. Rand has now made himself an enemy of liberty.” AdamKokesh, “Rand Paul Insults Libertarians,” *YouTube*, published on 15 May 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvuyI0b5xNM>, viewed on 19 May 2013

⁴⁴⁶ Chris Cantwell is a libertarian activist and rather controversial. A large reason for this controversy is the following passage on his website: “I would not deny that it is supremely impractical to resist police in the vast majority of cases, but this statement is not entirely accurate. Other than the fact that people generally accept the government to varying extents, and the fact that they are capable of using force on a scale that no mafia to date has been able to match, police are fundamentally no different than the mafia. I’d be willing to bet that if I could take the time to go back through your own recordings I would find you saying something to this effect. People are physically capable, and I would assume you agree, morally justified, in using whatever level of force would be necessary to repel aggressors, which the police are. We live in a physical universe that is no more or less free than the world we hope to see in the future, we just have a very serious organized crime problem that most people refer to as ‘the government.’” Christopher Cantwell, “Dear Stefan Molyneux, Police Are Criminals,” *Chris Cantwell: Anarchist, Atheist, Realist*, published on 6 May 2015, <http://christophercantwell.com/2015/05/06/dear-stefan-molyneux-police-are-criminals/>, viewed on 18 May 2015

He [Chris Cantwell] had written an article. . . basically it was about treating law enforcement officers and other government agents like everyone else. Meaning that if a police officer or a government agent initiates force against you, you have every right to defend yourself. Even if that means using force against that government agent.⁴⁴⁷

While this activist had been prevented from presenting at the main events at the festival by the organizers, the Free State Project (for fear of jeopardizing the future of PorcFest with state authorities), the subject was widely discussed and Alt-Expo, acting independently from the Free State Project, held a scheduled debate concerning the subject.⁴⁴⁸ The attendees represented the growing anarchist sentiment mentioned early against the traditional minarchist position to which the Free State Project in principle still adhered. It exhibits how extensively libertarians are beginning to decouple from their previous alliances and develop their own independent activism.

Finally, libertarian festivals were offering a new post-“age of fracture” organizational method that sought to unite sub-groups into a larger framework without neutralizing their independence. As stated by Daniel T. Rogers in the introduction, Americans had undergone a splintering of ideals and political viewpoints at the end of the twentieth century that made contemporary definitions either incomplete or obsolete. PorcFest, along with the experience libertarians gained in the Tea Party and Occupy, offered a way for libertarians to coalesce and find a greater meaning to being a libertarian. At PorcFest, it was possible to be against capitalism and simultaneously against the progressive welfare state, a position not easily maintained in “left-right” politics today. One can be against morality legislation and

⁴⁴⁷ Interviewee Independent 16, PorcFest 2014, New Hampshire, 24 June 2014, Volume II, pg. 305

⁴⁴⁸ This was a important moment for the Alt-Expo for two reasons. Firstly, this affirmed the independence of Alt-Expo from the Free State Project, which entailed the possibilities of hearing divergent viewpoints from the organizers of PorcFest. The entailed a further widening of libertarian viewpoints and opinions. Secondly, organizers within the Free State Project came to the Alt-Expo tent to address their decision to prevent the presentation. This had the effect of validating the presence of Alt-Expo, its ability run an independent campaign that might even contrast with the Free State Project, and also the presence of left-libertarian philosophies. It demonstrated in a microcasm how libertarians could co-exist when holding differing opinions and positions without the need for a central authority to regulate and manage affairs.

still possess a faith in either one of the major religions of some other belief system. An activist can rely on the scientific method and evidence-based theories while also rejecting the need for environmental legislation.

One activist with Alt-Expo expressed this redefinition and new sense of political comradery that has been largely absent since the mid-twentieth century. This activist, once a neo-conservative, described how they “rejected anything that didn’t fit into [their] ideological paradigm” once in the past.⁴⁴⁹ However, after using the internet to research politics, history, and economics, they were “opened up” to “a whole new world. . . Just the knowledge alone, it has changed my life.”⁴⁵⁰ Upon receiving this information, the activist turned to collective libertarianism “to find people who want the same things as I do. It’s just not a- I want to have people around me who value me.”⁴⁵¹ PorcFest provided this environment of support to further develop their new identity and future projects. There was another activist interviewed who was facilitating this process. “My place that I feel I can do something is reach out to people who have already awoken. People outside the matrix, at the bottom of the rabbit hole, who see the world for what it is. They may feel alone.”⁴⁵²

Festivals like the PorcFest are the fruits of this cooperation and demonstrate the unification of libertarian principles. Previously, before the Tea Party and Occupy, libertarian events were largely peripheral in American politics and culture and were largely misunderstood by other Americans. While these issues have not been completely dealt with, libertarian festivals have become more numerous, with greater numbers attending and with more attention focused on them by non-libertarians. Furthermore, the make-up

⁴⁴⁹ Interviewee Independent 9, at PorcFest X, New Hampshire, USA, 22 June 2013, Volume II, pg. 282

⁴⁵⁰ Interviewee Independent 9, PorcFest X, New Hampshire, USA, 22 June 2013, Volume II, pg. 285

⁴⁵¹ Interviewee Independent 9, PorcFest X, New Hampshire, USA, 22 June 2013, Volume II, pg. 281

⁴⁵² Interviewee Independent 13, PorcFest XI, New Hampshire, USA, 23 June 2014, Volume II, pg. 309

of these festivals is becoming far more heterogeneous than previous examples, as community libertarian principles are becoming more tolerated by traditional individual libertarians. This elevates these festivals and what they stand for beyond just Libertarian Party or Ron Paul election events towards something greater about contemporary American political culture.

PorcFest 2014

Upon returning to PorcFest in 2014, a year after researching libertarian involvement in the Tea Party and Occupy, much appears as it did in 2013. The huge tents and the pavilion are still there with talks to those new to the ideology and for everyone else looking to expand on what they already know going on simultaneously about libertarian issues, ideals, and lifestyles. Advertisements were posted next to the pavilion concerning the “Big Gay Dance Party,” indicating that it would be happening again and some of the individuals reading the advertisement were still carrying guns. The Agora Valley, with all of the independent stands, located there selling food, literature, and other goods remained and may have been even bigger than in 2013. The encampments with sign posts warning about bears seemed to stretch out further, indicating that there were possibly even more participants this year. That individual who had the Confederate flag in front of his tent was driving around on an ATV with that same flag posted on the back of it. However, when one understands the involvement of libertarians within the Tea Party and Occupy and the subsequent effect they produced, the PorcFest no longer appears the paradox that it initially did when first arriving in 2013. In fact, it is the popular perception of both that now seems

incongruent and contradictory after actually speaking to activists participating in the protests and the successive events afterwards.

There was also an equal range in the variety amongst activist backgrounds and interests at PorcFest 2014 as was in 2013. One activist who had been active for some time expressed, “you can describe me as an agorist – anarchist or agorist. Anarchism means no government, but I don’t quite agree with that because my government is God, my conscience.”⁴⁵³ Another activist was at PorcFest XI because he wanted “to tell the story about what life is like in the [libertarian] community” on his YouTube channel “Rebel Love Show.”⁴⁵⁴ However, this heterogeneity still does not lead to conflict or friction between differing beliefs or positions. .

Nevertheless, there are some changes from the previous year that indicates further growth in this libertarian community and the cooperation between individual and community libertarians. If one looks for the Alt-Expo at the same location it was last year for the presentations independent from those scheduled by the Free State Project, they will not find it. In fact, Alt-Expo has grown so much in influence at PorcFest that it now has time slots at the main tents next to the pavilion at the festival that run in parallel to the Free State Project. Yet Alt-Expo kept an independent tent at another location on the campsite for the other, more “unorthodox” presentations being held by other speakers. In realizing that the Alt-Expo was attracting significant attention, a decision was made within the Free State Project to include the Alt-Expo schedule into their central events in order to preserve incorporate those more friendly to the libertarian left and not marginalize them.. More

⁴⁵³ Interviewee Independent 15, PorcFest XI (2014), Lancaster, New Hampshire, 23 June 2014, Volume II, pg. 312

⁴⁵⁴ Interviewee Independent 13, PorcFest XI (2014), Lancaster, New Hampshire, 22 June 2014, Volume II, pg. 307

importantly, it was another signal in the growing eclectic backgrounds of libertarian activists at PorcFest that moved away from the dominance of individual oriented traditions. It was a surprise not only to just see this event unfold, but also to see the ever increase of people in the audience of these talks.

Also, there was an important exception to the absence of notable Tea Party and Occupy imagery at PorcFest that Americans would recognize. The Alt-Expo held a presentation at PorcFest XI that was entitled “Deconstructing Labels,” which largely centered on both the Tea Party and Occupy. This presentation centered on the ability certain labels have on influencing what people think about others and how individuals perceive themselves in society. The Tea Party and Occupy then became the focal point of this presentation, in which everyone was asked to describe what labels were used to describe them. The presenter then asked the audience “how do we deconstruct labels?” and “how do we get beyond those things like calling people statist?”⁴⁵⁵ They initiated the process by providing an examples themselves:

When I was at Occupy, I used to sit up and talk to people at night. They would tell me- start trashing on the Tea Party. I would be like, ‘No- we really- The Tea Party is where I honestly started.’⁴⁵⁶

Eventually, after heated debate, a conclusion was drawn by one of the audience members that was express in the following statement:

For me, looking at the middle portion of your Wenn diagram, Occupy . . . was never really well defined. In fact, I am not sure I can define the Tea Party. Even back then. Who is the Tea Party?⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁵ Alt Expo, “Deconstructing lables,” YouTube, published on 7 June 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wb-2VEXH1cU>, viewed on 28 June 2015

⁴⁵⁶ Alt Expo, “Deconstructing lables,” YouTube, published on 7 June 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wb-2VEXH1cU>, viewed on 28 June 2015

⁴⁵⁷ Alt Expo, “Deconstructing lables,” YouTube, published on 7 June 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wb-2VEXH1cU>, viewed on 28 June 2015

After the presentation, the presenter went on to state that she believed they were both just labels that many applied to a multitude of people in an attempt to define and categorize activities of which the rest of the population does not approve. Within that hour presentation entitled “Deconstructing Labels,” that presenter summarized the reality of the Tea Party and Occupy and how libertarians perceived their involvement in both.

What becomes apparent in both is that they are not actually movements that adhere to one particular ideology or support a specific political party. With this in mind, the conservative persona of the Tea Party is a result of a majority within Tea Party organizations adhering to conservatism in America today, with the same pertaining to Occupy and progressivism. These majorities eventually defined both groups because of how American politics has been classified over the twentieth century between two opposing poles, with each majority subscribed to the tenets of one of those poles. Furthermore, Americans outside the Tea Party and Occupy perceived them this way as well because of the press coverage categorizing them as partisan, as well as a result of their own biases. In so doing, both were further seen as accentuating the polarization in the country by turning grassroots activism into a partisan battlefield. However, as the Tea Party libertarian coalition and Occupy libertarian community demonstrated, and festivals like PorcFest continue to demonstrate, there is a redefinition occurring in American society in how Americans organize themselves that seek to surpass the “Age of Fracture.”

PorcFest, while the most notable festival or libertarian event, is not the only one and there is growth in the amount of events occurring across the country. Another example would be the Blue Ridge Free State Project, a relatively new and smaller event that focuses

on libertarian lifestyle choices like homeschooling and growing food at home.⁴⁵⁸ The Anthem Film Festival presents films that focus solely on libertarian values and principles that have attracted over 1,000 attendees over the past two years.⁴⁵⁹ A further example of a specialist festival is the Anarchist Book Fair in Boston, Massachusetts, which provides literature, classic and modern, for activists to expand their philosophies and activities.⁴⁶⁰ Furthermore, there are also brand new festivals appearing across the country, with the New York City Liberty Fest arriving in the fall of 2015 and bringing libertarianism to the largest of America's metropolises.⁴⁶¹

These festivals are continuing what was occurring in the Tea Party and Occupy, and are largely an extension of those organizing agents of the twenty first century. While they are founded by libertarians and established on a few core libertarian principles that exist, they are also non-partisan organizing agents that can be an important tool for social movements in the post-“age of fracture” era of American politics. The progress made by

⁴⁵⁸“About- Blue Ridge Liberty Project,” *Blue Ridge Liberty Project: For a Free and Voluntary Society*, viewed on 03 February 2015 <http://www.blueridgelibertyproject.com/about.html> “Blue Ridge Liberty Project is a Voluntarist & Peaceful Parenting organization with the goal of moving like-minded individuals to Asheville, NC. Mission Statement- The Blue Ridge Liberty Project was established with two goals in mind: 1) To create an environment where people from all walks of life, united by their love of liberty, can live free; 2) To spread the message of liberty locally and abroad.”

⁴⁵⁹ *Anthem: The Libertarian Film Festival*, <http://www.anthemfilmfestival.com/AboutUs.aspx>, viewed on 03 February 2015 The festival has been described by the organizers with the following: “Anthem began in 2011 as a small festival inside a conference room on the 26th Floor at Bally's Hotel. Our goal was to provide a venue for filmmakers who care about individuality and libertarian ideals. Now our films screen to standing-room audiences in the comfortable Sin City Theater at Planet Hollywood. In fact, last year we had over 1,000 viewers at two of our evening film events, projecting on three screens simultaneously in the Celebrity Ballroom. Enthusiastic Q & A lasted for nearly an hour after each of those events.”

⁴⁶⁰ “About the Boston Anarchist Bookfair,” *2014 Boston Anarchist Bookfair*, <http://www.bostonanarchistbookfair.org/about> “The Boston Anarchist Bookfair hopes to bring together people struggling to destroy capitalism, imperialism, patriarchy, heterosexism, racism, colonialism, statism and all other forms of oppression. The Boston Anarchist Bookfair explores the ideas of a system that avoids the use of coercion, violence, force and authority, while still producing a productive and desirable society. The Boston Anarchist Bookfair advocates stateless societies based on non-hierarchical voluntary associations.” Viewed on 03 February 2015

⁴⁶¹ *LibertyFest NYC 2015- October 10th & 11th*, <http://lfnyc.com>, viewed on 03 February 2015 “Join us at LibertyFest NYC 2015, as we hold a special funeral ceremony for the great State of New York (casket & all). Speakers from across the country will share their fond memories of New York, while also giving their opinions of why New York fell apart. In addition to the funeral ceremony for New York, other speakers will share their advice on independent journalism, economics, healthy eating, natural healing & much more,”

Alt-Expo and the general acceptance from the Free State Project regarding that progress is evidence towards this development and largely relies on activists themselves to continue it. They also exhibit the legacy of the Tea Party and Occupy in their evolutions, as well as how libertarians have influenced conversely those two organizing agents.

Afterword

When approaching the Tea Party and Occupy in 2016, the question of legacy emerges, as many Americans view these organizing agents as either gone or absorbed into the major political parties. This is an incorrect assumption, as there is still activism being carried out in the name of both across the country today that still motivates and inspires those participating to reach the goals of the original participants. Yet, it is undeniable that both have lost the media and public attention they had between 2008 and 2013, which does translate into a diminished presence in American politics. Yet, the primaries of 2016 would suggest that the legacy of those years between 2008 and 2013 survives today and indicates the Tea Party and Occupy are still relevant. Indeed, it also further points to the possibilities that the lack of attention the surviving organizations have today may very well turn around very quickly, as the underlining complaints on society that many activists in both had or have still exist for them today.

One example would be the emergence of Donald Trump as the nominee of the Republican Party, with many looking to the Tea Party as the force ultimately responsible for his emergence. Indeed, the very charges laid against Donald Trump, racism, bigotry, ignorance, fanaticism, and the use of “authoritarian” politics, were all used before against the Tea Party. Shortly after Senator Ted Cruz and Governor John Kasich abandoned their races in the Republican nomination, the economist listed one of the reasons why Trump is now the presumptive nominee as the following: “years of partisan grandstanding in Congress have

discredited America's entire political process, and the Republicans-especially those of them thrust to power by the party's previous populist insurgency, the Tea Party- are mainly responsible."⁴⁶² However, this fails to take into account the heterogeneity of the Tea Party, never mind the lack of centralization, and the multitude of impacts it could enforce, including those that work against the emergence of Trump. It further ignores the role of the Republican Party apparatus in creating the bitterness and mistrust amongst its members after the election of 2012 by barring libertarians from placing their votes for Congressman Ron Paul at the 2012 convention. It is a continuation of the view that the Tea Party is a purely conservative and fanatical "movement," as well as a failure to acknowledge the variety of activists that have participated and continue to participate in affiliated organizations.

Conversely, Senator Bernie Sanders is being labelled as the logical outcome of Occupy with his campaign oriented around inequality, the redistribution of wealth, and policies that are very akin to a new New Deal for the twenty first century, despite the fact that this label omits a very large minority of Occupy. Very much like the Republicans, there also seemed to be a very clear division between those who support Hilary Clinton and her status quo policies and those who support Bernie Sanders, mirroring the divide between those who remained loyal to President Obama's Democratic Party and those who turned to Occupy for a political outlet. Sanders himself is described as "a snow-haired scold who thunders against global free-trade pacts, wants to break-up the big banks and generally make America more like a Nordic social democracy," which is how Americans mostly viewed Occupy.⁴⁶³ However, this only pertained

⁴⁶² "Fear trumps Hope," *The Economist*, London, UK: Volume 419, Number 8988, May 7th-13th 2016, pg. 18

⁴⁶³ "What's next for Bernie Sanders," *The Economist*, London, UK: Volume 419, Number 8988, May 7th-13th 2016, pg. 35

to the progressives in Occupy, with a very sizable minority holding differing viewpoints and goals. This minority questioned the very foundation of the American economy, political system, and societal structure, with alternatives to these foundations as well, that is largely ignored and forgotten when categorizing Occupy as just a new movement of New Dealers. While there are some of this minority that support Sanders as a “beginning” to a larger process, there is much more behind these Occupy organizations that offers another voice for those in American politics that don’t subscribe to the “either or” category.

As for the libertarian presence in 2016, there has not been much change on the direct impact of libertarians in electoral politics, but indirectly they could be wielding a significant influence. The campaign of Senator Rand Paul was rather underwhelming in the Republican election for the presidential nominee and there is no real candidate in any other party, save the Libertarian Party with Gary Johnson, that really has even mounted a campaign for the presidency. However, the weak campaign of Senator Paul was indicative of the possible wider indirect effect of libertarian withdrawal from the Republican Party after the election of 2012, which may also have played a significant role in outcome of the 2016 nomination with Donald Trump. The experience many Occupy progressives had in the occupations with the Occupy libertarian community, while fractious and largely unproductive, may also have influenced the Sanders campaign by making those Democrats aware of the flaws in their own party and uncompromising in their goals. Therefore, while not directly exerting an influence, it would seem a distinct possibility to claim that libertarians are beginning to have at least an indirect impact on electoral politics.

What might make this impact grow more is the fact that the Free State Project has reached twenty thousand signatures in 2016, the target for beginning its libertarian society project, and now will begin preparations for all those who plan to move to New Hampshire.⁴⁶⁴ The Alt-Expo is also continuing with its efforts at the various venues it has attended and enquired whether another visit was intended for this dissertation at PorcFest XIII. However, it would appear that more of the innocence at PorcFest seems to have been eroded, as two big changes has occurred with regards to funding: the Atlas Society and the Charles Koch Institute have become contributors to the event. The agenda and talks do not seem to have changed, but this further questions, along with the qualification of the Free State Project as a non-political entity while having members in the New Hampshire state legislature, the future of the PorcFest and the Free State Project as a truly independent libertarian event. On a different note though; at the Liberty Fest NYC on 11 October 2015, a libertarian activist attempted to continue what had been witnessed in the Occupy working groups by advocating the following the very process that began in Occupy working groups.

From Ancaps and Ancoms, to Syndicalists and Individualists, Mutualists and Agorists, Voluntaryists and Market Anarchists, Panarchists and Anarchists without Adjectives, and other self-identified radicals- this talk is aimed at those who are against Authoritarianism, Statism, and Oppression in all forms.⁴⁶⁵

Whether or not PorcFest continues as it has in the past, the independence gained by libertarians in the Tea Party and Occupy and the effect of the cooperation between libertarians in both has now spread beyond one festival.

⁴⁶⁴ Joyce Lee, "Free State Project reaches goal," *The Dartmouth*, published on 5 February 2016, <http://thedartmouth.com/2016/02/05/free-state-project-reaches-goal/>, viewed on 8 May 2016

⁴⁶⁵ Subliminally, "Calling for Radical Alliance Among Anti Authoritarians," *YouTube*, published on 17 April 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cRcQvq_DJY, viewed on 8 May 2016

After establishing the impact of the Tea Party and Occupy on both conventional and unconventional politics in the United States, it would seem obvious then that there is still a need to understand both and their lasting impact on American politics. This becomes even more apparent when considering how narrow of a view most have concerning them, meaning that the events of today could very well be misinterpreted in reference to the Tea Party and Occupy. Therefore, a more comprehensive understanding of both the Tea Party and Occupy, as well of the participants in both, is needed to help understand why Donald Trump has become the nominee for the Republican Party and why libertarians in New York are calling for a grand alliance. Like other events of “populism,” the effects of the Tea Party and Occupy will continue to be felt in the near future, signifying that the “death” sentence for both may have been premature.

Ultimately, the Tea Party and Occupy are organizing agents to bring together activists with the original intent of those who created these agents into being to revitalize and expand various libertarian ideologies. To claim that both represent diametrically opposing positions is failing to understand that these agents are abstract concepts that have no real inherent character or positions other than the ones assigned to them by those who constituted them. While it might be easy to identify the conservative and progressive activism within both, they don’t constitute the entirety of either the Tea Party or Occupy. This fashion of thinking also blinds people to possibilities for coalitions and cooperation that were made very apparent by libertarian involvement in both. Recognizing that each are rather instruments for whoever intends to use them for whatever purpose reshapes how we perceive them, as well as grassroots activism in the American political system.

In fact, in recognizing the libertarian activists in both as separate from conservatism and progressivism, a different narrative emerges. This narrative relates to how early claims of activists having a partisan neutral agenda actually may have been sincere and probably originated from libertarians. Their goals were not limited to electoral politics, nor were they excluded though, and activists in the Tea Party and Occupy were seeking a broader change in society itself that was missed by most Americans viewing them through a partisan lens. PorcFest was also an expression of this partisan neutral agenda, where activists were seeking to reshape the political landscape away from what it was prior to the Tea Party and Occupy and acted as an extension of those later organizing agents. Specifically, libertarians were in fact undertaking a contrary stance on American society, politics, and economics from progressives and conservatives that was garnering a noticeable effect even if not completely understood, which warranted further research.

However, despite this neutrality concerning partisanship with regards to the Tea Party and Occupy as organizing agents, the motivation behind the initiation of both essentially comes from the same source- libertarianism. Those of the individualist libertarian tradition were seeking to break from the association with conservatism and demonstrate that they weren't "corporate" minions seeking to institutionalize inequality in the American political system. Conversely, the libertarians who were more concerned about how individuals exist in a community were seeking to just have their ideals recognized in the political system and end the exile they had experienced throughout American history. Both the Tea Party and Occupy were created by libertarians to accomplish these tasks in the wake of the recession of 2008-09. While these libertarians may have had different emphases, with individual libertarians largely

associated with the Tea Party and community libertarians with Occupy, they still originate from the same underlining ideology. In essence, the Tea Party and Occupy, at their foundation, actually originate from one source expressed through a dichotomy that mirrors the development of libertarianism over the past century.

It may be not be a coincidence that it was libertarians that established these organizing agents given the nature of the ideology to which they adhere. The libertarian drive for virtual absolute freedom establishes a strong foundation for activists to express themselves freely and conduct their activism as they wish. In conjunction with this freedom, the responsibility for that freedom also translates into a respect for others freedom and a restraint against superimposing one's views upon others. While libertarians may hold strong viewpoints, they tolerate diversity, even sometimes embrace it, knowing that every individual will have their own desires and goals. Most importantly, they are not, at least for now, seeking conventional political power for their own gain and appear sincere in their positions outlined above. Therefore, they would be a natural initiator of organizing agents like the Tea Party, Occupy, and PorcFest that would include conservatives, progressives, and other ideological backgrounds.

Upon accepting this new narrative about the Tea Party and Occupy, new perspectives emerge concerning American politics that can drastically reshape how Americans envision citizen-led activism in the political process. The Tea Party libertarian coalition was a progression in post-modern politics, in that there was an attempt to bring the political process down to the grassroots level instead of continuing the representative process. With the tracking of legislation and the analysis of its constitutionality to the questioning of the Constitution itself, Tea Party activists were demonstrating that average citizens could become

involved in the legislative process. Also, the other important aspect of this post-modern politics was the emphasis on non-centralization and a wide level of autonomy for local organizations within the libertarian coalition. There was no real attempt to create a political party style of organization, although astroturfing organizations certainly attempted to display that image. It was an early expression of what many have described other acts of civil activism today to be as a leaderless revolution.

However, it was not only new perspectives to politics that the Tea Party libertarian coalition and Occupy libertarian community introduced to Americans, but also a new way of conceptualizing economic organization. The Tea Party libertarian coalition established a cogent argument against those criticizing the perils of the “free market” today by arguing against the very people who advocated the “free market” today. The Occupy libertarian community not only reintroduced Americans to a style of economic management that largely vanished over the past few decades, but they also combined them with the new possibilities that modern technology might deliver. In concert with their political position, libertarians in general also introduced the radical new concept that the “freed market” and cooperation organizations need not be mutual exclusive and could actually co-exist. The principals of voluntarism and cooperation could permit their simultaneous existence that might lead to a mutual enhancement.

While libertarians brought these new perspectives to Americans by joining the Tea Party and Occupy, there were other activists in these organizing agents that represented the majority of Americans that had important points to present as well. Tea Party conservatives had

principles with an inherent rationality that demonstrates how conservatives have indeed developed a lasting connection with American culture. There is also a basic truth concerning their criticisms of government and politics, especially concerning the dangers of public debt and the over reliance on public services for personal support. Furthermore, despite the image of the ignorant, intolerant Tea Party conservative, what actually emerged through the stereotypes were surprising positions that profess a belief in global warming, liberal treatment for homosexuals, and a tolerant position on race. It was these initial positions that made the alliance with the Tea Party libertarian coalition possible because, despite conservative positions on the economy, these other positions showed a tolerance that was compatible with libertarian positions.

Ironically though, the motivation that initiated the activism amongst conservatives is also pushing many away from their original principles towards other ideals that depart from a democratic society. Conformity, deference to authority, and paranoia become the focus of conservative activism, paradoxically causing them to adopt the very practices they initially protested against. It has led to a dead end in Tea Party conservative activism, with astroturf organizations, racist and xenophobic elements, and even the Republican Party co-opting the stalled movement for their own benefits. The election of 2010 accentuated some of these traits, leading Tea Party conservatives to work against the libertarian positions on freedom of action and respect for others. Within Tea Party organizations, conservatives began to restrict the activism of others, whether libertarian or not, and attempt to create the very conservative Tea Party that many Americans thought existed.

While conservatives, whether the initial incarnation or the post-2010 conservatives, represent the majority of Tea Party activists today, the progenitor of Tea Party activism would be the libertarian faction that works largely outside public attention. Despite misconceptions concerning libertarianism being an extreme right-wing ideology, libertarians actually defy conventional political pigeonholing and would explain how they can appeal to various activists from different backgrounds. The other hallmark of their activism is the adoption of the non-aggression principle to every aspect of their actions and use voluntarism to spread their message, creating a very solid activist base participating under its own free will. By promoting voluntarism and non-aggression, libertarians avoid the transformation that has become so prevalent amongst conservatives. Nevertheless, this form of activism exists in direct contrast to the transformed conservative fashion and often has led and continues to lead to friction between the two trends. Furthermore, the image of the Tea Party as a reassertion of individual rights in response to the abuse of collective power is proving rather confining for libertarians, since their activism does entail other aspects of society. Therefore, the future of the libertarian coalition within the Tea Party is questionable given this confining nature along with the friction with conservatives who have passed through the transformation process.

Occupy libertarians conversely represented a much more different facet than the popular image Americans have of this organizing agent by denying the state as an instrument for their activism. While anarchism has always been associated with Occupy and they by definition reject any notion of the state, Occupy libertarians projected a more coherent anti-statist position than Americans are accustomed to. In fact, many of the positions held by Occupy libertarians would have been also heard in Tea Party meetings, making it extremely

difficult to place these activist on the political spectrum. They used defining terms like socialist or syndicalist, but also appeared to hold positions in common with the political right in the United States, like the disdain for government regulation. To many Americans, these associations seemed alien and, while presenting coherent arguments, still seemed difficult to understand. Furthermore, drawing inspiration from writers such as Proudhon, Kropotkin, or Bakunin did not ameliorate the foreignness many Americans felt when listening to their viewpoints. Occupy libertarians found themselves in the outsider position in American culture and they saw the occupations as an opportunity to correct that situation.

Their economic positions challenged the predominant zeitgeist concerning the inevitability of managed market economies based on perennial growth by offering alternatives that many did not realize had historical links in the United States. While the occupations in the various cities or town were shut down, their limited existence offered a glimpse into how Americans could develop a shared economy in which people shared the responsibility of ownership. The occupations also provided a venue for others to advocate their alternatives, whether it be a resource based economy, worker-owned businesses, or through similar positions to that of the Tea Party libertarian coalition. No matter which position was taken, in much the same fashion as the Tea Party libertarian coalition, the Occupy libertarian community was challenging the status quo, which they defined largely as the perennial growth paradigm. Their beliefs were that this paradigm led to inequality, environmental degradation, and inefficiency. To buttress their positions, Occupy libertarians were able to draw on the relatively forgotten history of cooperatives, collective ownership, and resistance to growth economics that far exceeded the New Deal history to which Occupy progressives adhered.

Nevertheless, Occupy progressives outnumbered Occupy libertarians and received the overwhelming amount of attention from media outlets and the American population. In addition, Occupy progressives did present a poignant criticism of society today with regards to inequality and a general dissatisfaction with how established liberal organizations were reacting to it. The majority of Americans was sympathetic to their criticisms and agreed that something should be done to reverse the problem. While it is common to associate the Tea Party with conservatism, Occupy progressives surprisingly offer a “conservative” agenda in that they are seeking to reassert the New Deal for the twenty-first century. Their criticisms are largely targeted at the rise of the conservative movement that evolved thirty to forty years ago, which has contributed to the erosion (e.g. Glass-Steagall Act) or challenging of main concepts of New Deal legislation and the movement that pushed for that legislation. It was this challenge against the political developments over the past four decades that facilitated the alliance with the Occupy libertarian community.

However, Occupy progressives, like their progressive predecessors, were doubtful in the public’s abilities to correct the problems of society and sought a similar elite-driven path to the problem that had been used previously. This translated into an alteration of General Assembly protocols in Occupy, where certain individuals began to dominate procedures and coordinate agreement and actions with a select few that excluded the rest of the organization. When there were charges of sexism, racism, or elitism at the occupation sites, they often referred to this process, which may not have had anything to do with the original charges. As many perceived the solutions of progressives as counterproductive or accentuating the problems many in Occupy saw in society, the progressive approach was off-putting. Very much like the

Tea Party, friction started between the various constituents as a result, like that in New Hampshire, that often led to the either paralysis of the occupation or sometimes to its fracture. This friction caused by the Occupy progressive agenda was often the cause of the impression of no “coherent message” amongst the majority of the public, but a failure to understand how Occupy worked originally also contributed to this impression. It furthermore stood in stark contrast to the “leaderless” activism approach preached by the activists in the Occupy libertarian community and the idea of consensus that was so crucial in the General Assemblies.

As a result of these contrasting characters in relation to what has become associated with Occupy, General Assemblies became arenas for debate rather than consensus, as progressives and libertarians argued for their divergent visions for the future. Occupy progressives, who embraced hierarchy and majoritarian decision making, were frustrated with the requirement of consensus to approve a decision in the General Assembly. There attempts to institute elite management of occupations and streamline the legislation process was emblematic of the Progressive tradition, with Reinhold Niebuhr and Walter Lippmann being prominent examples. This was an anathema to Occupy libertarians and a violation of the principles associated with the General Assembly, introduced by Occupy libertarians.

This developed into heavy friction between the two foci of Occupy, as the differences in how they envisioned community became very apparent. While many viewed Occupy as a collection of like-minded individuals largely agreeing and getting along, the reality was a stark contrast. Occupations were fractured along fault lines of ideology, with the foci acting as an umbrella to encapsulate the many subsets, and caused many to permanently split. If the

various occupations survived into the post-occupation phase intact, the General Assembly became more of meeting point for Working Groups to recruit new members. Furthermore, working groups eventually developed into the engines of activism in Occupy because they were not engines of consensus between differing world views.

Therefore, it would appear that, while the Tea Party and Occupy are often seen as being diametrically opposed to each other by the majority of Americans, this artificial divide for libertarians in both, as well as the attendees at Porcfest, doesn't hold true. The libertarian factions in both were advocating nearly identical positions that virtually equated to a unified agenda at the foundation of Tea Party and Occupy organizations. The differences that did exist emanated from what libertarians believed to be the ultimate source of abuse of power, either corporate or governmental, and the subsequent historical associations in traditional politics that occurred as a result (community libertarians with progressives and individual libertarians with conservatives). With this common starting point, the conservative and progressive expressions in the Tea Party and Occupy became just gradations on how much certain activists were willing to accept libertarian principles.

It might be true that astroturf organizations in the Tea Party and the homeless of Occupy may have little in common, but they only represent one small facet of each. Indeed, the conservative and progressive majorities in the Tea Party and Occupy respectively have some aspects in common, as demonstrated by the Whitman blog and the Wenn diagram. As one moves closer to the libertarian foundation of both the Tea Party and Occupy however, the more commonality one finds in positions on the limits on government, how the economy

should operate, and notions of personal liberty. Representing a common core or origin for both, libertarianism demonstrates how both phenomena actually are built on a common foundation. The conservative, progressive, and other constituent groups represent gradations or levels that depart from this common starting point, with each level further away from the foundation representing a distancing from libertarians values.

These levels are perceptible when considering the instances of cooperation between the Tea Party and Occupy, no matter how unbelievable it might seem. Whenever there has been a case of cooperation between the two, it would seem that much more often than not libertarians were involved in that cooperation. Even in instances of cooperation between progressives and conservatives, libertarians were essential in bridging the divide between the two that separates the commonality between the Tea Party and Occupy. This is a result of the common libertarian roots of both that shapes how fractions in both organize themselves and how members conduct their activism. Libertarians are also able to communicate and coordinate the various interests of both conservatives and progressives because libertarians perceive themselves outside the “left-right” political paradigm. Acting as “independents” with positions in common on both sides, libertarians can act as facilitators of cooperation in order to develop a more potent form of protest and activism.

However, the strongest form of cooperation between Tea Party and Occupy organizations is that between libertarians on both sides, which is actually having the dual effect of uniting Tea Party and Occupy interests while simultaneously transforming libertarianism. This cooperation took place in Occupy working groups, with the Tea Party libertarian coalition

looking toward Occupy organizations as a sense of revitalization after the domination of the Tea Party name by conservatives following the 2010 election. The coalition found itself welcomed in working groups run by the Occupy libertarian community, who had withdrawn from the progressive-dominated General Assemblies to develop and further their activism. Within these working groups, there was a fusion of the individual libertarian and community libertarian agendas that has shifted away from an emphasis on the cause of the problems in society today towards an emphasis on how they envision the future. Whereas individual libertarians focused on government and politicians and community libertarians focused on organized capital as the causes to problems in society, they both envision a society where the state does not exist (or is severely limited) and individuals organize themselves as they want. This presents a common cause with the possibility of uniting both into a general libertarian movement that abandons the previous links to conservatives and progressives.

The result of this unification in activism was the proliferation of festivals and other libertarian events like PorcFest. As libertarians in both the Tea Party and Occupy became more independent from progressives and conservatives, along with the fact that their organizing agents went through processes of internal radicalization that had become associated with other ideologies, they looked outside to further develop their activism further. This new direction towards organizations that had clear libertarian associations avoided the neutral approach of the Tea Party and Occupy in order to prevent the same outcome even if others were still welcome. Yet, some activists kept links with the Tea Party and Occupy to continue the influx of new participants at their own events that turned the PorcFest into almost an extension of the Tea Party and Occupy. In so doing, a new libertarian movement was initiated that was more

eclectic, more independent from established politics, and more confident given the growth in numbers that occurred after the establishment of the Tea Party and Occupy. They gave individual libertarians the differentiation they needed away from conservatism and established community libertarians as a viable political choice in American politics.

Moreover, it encouraged the further development of hybrid libertarianism, like those found in Alt-Expo with their unique blend of market anarchism that intends to work towards more “leftist” goals like ending inequality. The mixture of libertarian activism in Occupy not only led to cooperation between activists who adhered to different strands of libertarian ideology, but it culminated into further new strands. These new strands combined different aspects of individual and community libertarian thought that has produced unique and surprising results. For example, anarchism is no longer divided between tradition anarchism or anarcho-socialism and anarcho-capitalism, as there is anarcho-collectivism, mutualism, syndicalism, voluntarism, ultra-anarchism, primitivism, and, of course, the market anarchism mentioned above. This has led to more possibilities for cooperation and the development of the libertarian ideological spectrum that could challenge the established one based on state involvement today. As Alt-Expo has been recognized as too influential to be ignored at Porcfest by the organizers, the Free State Project, it would imply that their influence is indeed growing.

Yet, the Tea Party and Occupy have only marked the beginning of this libertarian transformation, as both have faded away from the attention of the public and that of the media. While no longer garnering as much coverage, particularly for Occupy and lesser so for the Tea Party, libertarians can no longer rely on either as recruiting or propaganda tools as they

did previously. While organizations do still exist bearing those titles, libertarians need to develop new strategies for the future to spread their ideology and not to become complacent with what they have achieved so far. PorcFest is one such example, but, as the past suggests, these festivals alone cannot attract new joiners or converts over to libertarians activism. For the first years of its existence, PorcFest's growth was rather stagnant and the explosion in numbers was arguably linked to the emergence of both the Tea Party and Occupy. What libertarians need are more organizing agents that can attract Americans from different backgrounds that can reach out to those unfamiliar with the ideology or dissuade any misconceptions they may have of libertarian activists. Indeed, this is fundamental if the growth witnessed over the past five years is to continue.

Additionally, as highlighted earlier, there are libertarians who did not experience the cooperation between Tea Party and Occupy libertarians who still harbor prejudices against their libertarians counterparts amongst both individual and community libertarians. They represent a real challenge to those seeking to expand past the old alliances and avenue of activism towards something more inclusive. The old divisions between libertarians factions like Randians, Rothbardians, anarcho-capitalists, or anarcho-syndicalists will reverse what has been achieved and activists will feel isolated and impotent in today's political climate if not fully addressed. The inclusion of Alt-Expo into the main events of Porcfest is one example of a step towards overcoming these factions. However, it remains an issue for libertarians to overcome if they are to continue with this evolution and break free of the old alliances and divisions.

Even if the Tea Party and Occupy have faded from public attention, they nevertheless existed and represented the beginning of a process, whether recognized or not. The Tea Party has indeed produced radicalized conservative organizations that, with funding from astroturfing organizations, have produced government shutdowns and rather eccentric behavior in national politics. Occupy was dealt a severe blow with the closure of the occupations, which drove it underground, and inequality is still alarmingly high in American society. The presidential primaries of 2016 attest to their lasting impact, whether positive or negative, which would demonstrate that both are still relevant today. Furthermore, the fact that festivals like PorcFest still continue today with Tea Party and Occupy activists also still in attendance, the role of the PorcFest as extension of both would signify that the spirit of the Tea Party and Occupy continue on today and could return if activists are determined.

While many would consider them to be either failures, in the case of Occupy, or dangers to society, as in the case of the Tea Party, the narrative concerning libertarians would provide a counter to that assessment. Both represented many various aspects of American society, often contrasting with one another, and to assume that all were either negative or ineffective rests on simple and incorrect assumptions of both. In fact, the greatest failure could be amongst the majority of society concerning their inability to comprehend these points and capitalize on those moments where different aspects of society could have agreed on certain goals and while still adhering to their individual ideologies. Nevertheless, it may only be the commencement, but the Tea Party and Occupy have bequeathed to American politics a new vision that could alter how Americans interact in society. The Tea Party and Occupy may not be able to lead the forms of activism today, but these agents and those activists within, initiated a process that has

gathered momentum. The continuation of this vision lies with those in the Alt-Expo, the Free State Project, and all the other libertarians across the country attending new festivals and other libertarian events.